

HOW JOHN MARTIN KEPT HIS OWN.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

My name is Betsey Winegar; my age is eighty-three; my home is with the Martins, John and Nancy, and their five sweet-faced lads and lassies. There are others of this family that have grown up and gone out into the world for themselves; but I'll not stop now to tax my weak old woman's memory for their names. They all love and honor their Aunt Betsey, bless their dear souls; for who had more to do with bringing them up than I? Indeed, Nancy herself often tells me that her children have all had two mothers; and it makes me quite happy, when I think that I have been enabled to do some good in the world, and that this thought will comfort me when I die. For the few years that are left to me here, there is a pleasant home secured for me with the Martins. Forty years have I lived in this quaint stone mansion, roomy and comfortable, with its high-ceiled rooms, its wide fire-places, and its substantial carved furniture, brought over the seas as long ago as when we were all under King George; and forty summers have I heard the keen blades whistling through the grain, on the broad acres of the great farm. I first came here the second week after Freeborn Martin's wife died, to take the place of housekeeper; and when John Martin succeeded his father here, I kept house for Nancy till I could labor no longer; and now for ten years I have kept the chimney-corner, as happy as an old woman could be, in singing lullabies to the babes and darning the stockings.

All this that I have told is plain matter-of-fact family history, and needs only a paragraph to tell it. But there is a story lurking in it which is well worth the telling; the story of how John Martin happened to succeed his father, as I have called the old man, in the ownership of this grand old place. Among all the strange things I have seen and known in this world of queer happenings, this is the strangest; and if I fail to make a story out of it, the fault will be with me, and not with the affair itself. Nursery tales I can tell by the hour, to Will and Nannie; but a real story, for grown folk—well, well, we shall see. I will wipe my glasses, and tell it to Will; tho

lad is clever, and writes plainly for a mere child, and together, I think we shall succeed.

Freeborn Martin was not John's father. John was the orphan son of his only brother; but Freeborn had a son who was just John's age, a boy named Pendell. The uncle had adopted John; and when I first came to live at the house, both the lads were fifteen years old. But never were two boys more unlike. John was a fair-haired, pleasant-faced youth, whom every one loved, because he was so kind and good; and he was a bright, intelligent lad, withal, and fond of his books. He loved his uncle dutifully, and was constantly trying to make himself useful to him. Sometimes he posted up his tenant and store accounts, sometimes he wrote his letters, and at last he coaxed his uncle to let him cast the interest on his mortgages, and receive the payments. In a very few years after I came, it was plain to be seen that the uncle had learned to place the utmost confidence in him, and to love the boy like an own son. For the boy's sake I was glad of it, for I liked him right well, and I was sure that our confidence in him was not misplaced.

I always thought that if Pendell Martin had been a better son, his father would not have turned from him to John as he did. Freeborn Martin was not a man of firm, decided character; his fortune had come to him ready-made, and the rude knocks and jostlings of the world, that make men bold and independent in mind, had not been his. But he was a man of the strongest local attachments and home-feellings; he had loved his wife fondly, and her death was a sad blow to him; and he was now beginning the downhill of life (for he was well toward sixty), and naturally looked for some loved object upon whom his stricken heart could lean. That object he could not find in his own son; and John became the child of his heart as well as the child of his adoption.

For Pendell Martin was a bad and wayward boy, almost from his cradle. I never could tell where he got his bad blood, for his mother was the gentlest of beings, and his father had nothing at all vicious about him. But we know that "the sins of the fathers

shall be visited upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations;" and I have no doubt that the lad inherited his boldness from some depraved ancestor. Pendell was dark and sinister-looking; he had a handsome face, but it was the beauty of evil thoughts and passions, and it was easy to see their imprint on it. When I came to the house to live, he was already keeping company with the worst characters of the neighborhood, and a tavern, some miles off, was the well-known scene of their revelries and debaucheries. And the wayward boy seemed to care for nothing else. His father's mild remonstrances were treated with contempt; John, who often drew near to him as a brother, and affectionately tried to win him from his evil ways, he repulsed angrily, sometimes brutally; and the few words of good advice that I ventured now and then to address him, were met with such sneers as discouraged me from any further trial.

So he went on, from bad to worse. We saw but little of him at the mansion; I do not think he was there more than one night out of three, and he never came to any meal but breakfast.

One day in November—I think I shall never forget *that* day—Pendell came down stairs from his chamber, late in the morning, and went straight to the library. It so happened that we were all there together at the time. Mr. Martin and John sat by the great square table, for it was quarter-day; there was a thick pile of bank-bills between them, and not a little coin, and John was counting it, while his uncle checked off the hundreds on a paper. I had come up from the kitchen to ask about some supplies for the house, that were to be ordered from Baltimore; and I stood with my question unasked when Pendell came abruptly into the room. His face was flushed with the hard drinking of that very morning, and his eyes were terribly bloodshot. He looked so savage and brutal as he strode across the floor, that I shrank away from him, and put the table between us. He came right up to his father, and said, abruptly:

"I want five hundred dollars."

Mr. Martin looked at him, and his face whitened.

"Pendell, my son," he replied, kindly, but in a firmer voice than I had ever heard him use, "I am shocked at your appearance. I fear—"

"No matter for your fears," the boy interrupted, rudely thrusting his hand almost into his father's face. "Give me the money, and stop your preaching."

Mr. Martin's thin lips quivered, and his cheek paled still more. "Unnatural boy," he exclaimed, in a voice shaking with indignation, "I will not give you what you ask. The money I have wasted on you without stint, you have used at the gaming-table, and with your profligate companions. I will no longer furnish you the means to accomplish your ruin. Go and reform, and—"

He said no more; with a shocking oath, Pendell seized the notes on the table, and was turning to leave the room, when John sprang from his chair and caught him by the arm. Pendell thrust the bills in his pocket, and turned fiercely upon his cousin, who held his arm tightly. I think John was the stronger of the two; but there was a devilish glittering in Pendell's eye as the two faced each other, that made me tremble.

"Let go!" he whispered, his voice full of rage.

"Put back the bills!" John sturdily answered; and with that they grappled together, and in half a minute both fell heavily to the floor, John uppermost. I was exulting at his victory, as I thought it, when he uttered a cry of pain, and fell heavily on his side, while Pendell jumped to his feet, and darted from the room and the house, carrying the money with him. I learned afterward that there was more than eight hundred dollars of it.

Poor John! He was stabbed deep in the side with the long knife that his cousin carried; and he hung between life and death for five weeks, most of the time out of his head. Nothing but the best surgery and the most careful nursing saved him; but after a time his strength came back slowly, and little by little he became able to leave his bed, and then to walk about. I am sure that his uncle loved him better than ever, after this; and I am quite certain that he made up his mind never to recognize Pendell as his son again. In fact, he told me as much, and more. He told me one night, as we watched at John's bedside, when he seemed to be relapsing, and we were very anxious for him, that he should not cease to pray to God for the recovery of this dear boy, that he might give him the love and the fortune which he could never bestow upon his ingrate son. These were his

exact words, as near as I can remember them; and I had cause enough afterward to recall them to mind.

Before John had quite recovered, we heard intelligence from Pendoll that relieved us all. He had shipped at Philadelphia, under a false name, as a 'fore-the-master on a China ship. I honestly hoped that we might never see his dark, wicked face again; and I think his father hoped the same.

Well—I can pass over the next ten years very briefly. They were very happy, quiet years, and I thank God for them. With Pendell's evil face out of the old house, we were all peace; and John grew so fast into the old man's favor, that they soon came to call each other "father" and "son," and John quickly took charge of the estate, and conducted all the business. One Christmas-eve John persuaded his foster-father to have a great party, and it was given for the first night in the new year. I don't think the old house ever held a gayer, or a merrier, or a handsomer company, even in the Revolutionary days, when Howe, and Cornwallis and their staffs, entertained the tory families of the neighborhood here. The next day at breakfast, Mr. Martin suddenly said:

"John, I don't know of any young woman that was here last night, who would make you a better wife, than Nancy Sharp."

It was the first time I had heard anything of that kind talked of in the house, and I looked a little anxiously at John, to see how he would take it. John was a handsome young man, then, and he looked handsomer still as he blushed at the remark. But he spoke up very prompt:

"I am glad you like her, sir," he said. "We've been engaged for a month or so, and I was thinking it was time to mention it to you."

He was just as cool about it, as though he had only asked me to pass the bread. The old man looked a little vexed at first, and then broke out into a hearty laugh; and before he rose from the table, he made John promise that he would bring Nancy to the mansion before the year was out.

They were married the next October; and dear, sweet Nancy in the house, we were all happier still. She loved her husband, you may be sure; but she had enough left for Aunt Betsey, as they began to call me, and Mr. Martin; and more than once I heard the old man say, that if he could blame John for

anything, it was for not bringing her here sooner.

They were a very happy pair, John and Nancy. Their first child was named for Mr. Martin; he was just a year old when Mr. Martin died. The old man had been failing fast for two years, and the doctor had warned us that we must watch him close, as his heart was affected, and he was likely to go off sudden. And he did go off sudden enough.

It was one midsummer evening, an hour before dark, and Nancy had helped him up to his bed. John and I were sitting in the library, and as we heard her cry out, we ran up stairs, and found him gasping on the bed, and Nancy holding the hartshorn to his nose. We knew it would soon be over with him, for his face was ghastly pale, and his breathing thick and hard. John held up his head while Nancy still held the salts to his nose, and I chafed his hands and feet. In a moment he opened his eyes wide, and seemed to recognize us. He nodded and smiled, and looked from one to the other of them.

"Good-by, my children," he said, speaking faintly, and with much difficulty. "You'll not be sorry that you've loved the old man. The will is—"

He stopped there; his jaw fell, and the last awful change came over his face. Those whom he had called his children closed his eyes, and retired to weep; and I laid him out, and sat by him through the night.

Well—as many times as I have told over the strange story of what happened in that house before the second day-dawn, I have always found some one to ask me if I was not asleep and dreaming. Once for all—I was not. I was wide awake; and that which I say I saw and heard, I know I saw and heard. But let me tell it:

About ten o'clock I heard the knocker sound, and immediately after there was a noise of voices, in loud and angry altercation. I stepped out into the hall, and leaning over the baluster, I saw John by the front door, with a light in his hand, barring the entrance against some one whom I could not see. But the instant the person spoke, though twelve years had passed since I had heard that voice, I knew it as that of Pendell Martin!

"Let me in," he demanded.

"Never," replied John.

I could not see their faces; but I could

imagine the look of firm determination on one, and that of malice and hate on the other. There was much more said between them, but John soon went out and shut the door, and I heard nothing further. In half an hour both he and Nancy came up stairs, looking troubled enough, I promise you. They told me at once what had happened. Pendell had reached the neighborhood just in time to hear of his father's death, and had come immediately to the mansion to demand possession. "I am the sole heir," was his language, "and I warn you all to leave as soon as the old man is buried." John was staggered at his audacity, and startled at the voice of his claim. He knew not what to say in reply, except to threaten Pendell with punishment, for the attempt on his life. The bold, bad man only laughed at the threat, and defied him to convict the richest man in the county (as he would be) of any crime. Then, reiterating his assurance that he should take possession, and summarily turn us all out immediately after the funeral, he went away.

There was trouble enough under that roof that night. John had taken it for granted that there was a will; indeed, the dying man's unfinished sentence indicated it; but where was it? He was right, I know, to look for it, though Freeborn Martin lay dead in the house; for he well knew that if anything could pain the departed spirit, it would be to know that the darlings of his adoption had been driven from the house, and that his unnatural son was master of all he had left. It was a bitter, anxious fear; and with such anxiety as they can never know again, did John and Nancy search for the will. I heard them all through the night, in every part of the house, and I prayed for their success, as I sat with the corpse; but when they came to me at daylight, their sad, haggard faces showed that they had not found it. Poor Nancy! She leaned on her husband's shoulder, and sobbed as she told me so.

That was a long, long, doleful day. The neighbors kept coming to look at the corpse, and some of them almost drove the Martins distracted with their questions about Pendell, and the will, and whether they wouldn't have to leave the place. But it came to an end, as all long, doleful days must; and then we were left alone again. I took my seat by the bedside of the dead, about nine o'clock. (I had slept some during the day), and en-

tered upon my vigil with such sorrowful feelings as I had never had before. The funeral was to take place on the next day; and on the day after these dear young people must leave their home forever. The door was ajar, and as I closed it I heard poor Nancy sobbing in the room below, while John tried to soothe her.

Full of my wretched thoughts about this dismal breaking up, I sat and heard the clock strike ten, eleven and twelve. Then I fell into a doze, which lasted about an hour; I think the clock striking one roused me. I started and looked about, uncertain where I was. My eyes rested on the bed, and the thin, wrinkled face of the dead, lying on the pillow; and then—

As true as I'm a living woman, it *did* happen, just as I'm telling it! The eyes opened and looked at me, and brightened; the head was raised clear off the pillow, and the lips moved. I bent forward, but I had no need to; the words came just as clear and distinct as I ever heard Freeborn Martin speak:

"—in the cushion of the green easy-chair."

That was all. The thread of his speech was taken up just where he had left it, and the sentence finished; the head fell back, and the eyes were fixed and dull again.

I wasn't frightened; I don't know that I was astonished; I believe I had no thought just then but of the green easy-chair. It was Mr. Martin's favorite; he had used it ever since I had been in the family. I ran down to the library where it was always kept, and found John sitting in it, holding his wife in his lap, while the child slept in the crib. They were both dozing; and they must have thought me crazy, by the way I burst in and turned them out of it. In less than a minute I ripped the cloth open with my scissors, and began to pull out the hair-stuffing by handfuls; and the third handful brought the will! Then my overtasked nerves gave way, and I fell exhausted into the blessed old chair, and threw the precious paper to John. He read it to himself, and then read it aloud, while great tears of joy stood in his blue eyes. The will was in Mr. Martin's well-known handwriting, all legally executed and witnessed, and was dated the day after Pendell's flight from the house, twelve years before. It was just twelve lines long, and gave all his property to John. Whatever induced him to hide it, and to keep the secret to his death-bed, I can't tell. Some thought, it was the

fear that Pendell might some day find and destroy it. I can't think of any better reason.

I told them what had happened in the dead-room, and we all went up together. The body was just as I left it; the jaw had fallen again, the eyes were fixed and dull, and the hands were cold. One of the servants was despatched for the doctor; he came within an hour, and pronounced the old man dead—dead without question, he said.

Dr. Symonds was one of the best friends of the family, and John did not hesitate to tell him all about the matter. The good doctor soon convinced us that there was nothing miraculous about it—though it was wonderfully strange. Mr. Martin did not die, he said, until that morning, when he had revealed his secret. He had been seized with *cataplexy* thirty hours before, and had probably lain in a stupor ever since, so near like death that the truth could not be detected. The spirit had at last departed with a struggle that had roused the dormant body; and the half-uttered thought found complete expression in the very words that had been silenced on his lips by the stupor. Something in that way the doctor explained it; and I suppose he was entirely right about it.

The funeral took place the next day, Pendell Martin attended it, and after it was over, he came directly to the house, with quite a

crowd following him, curious to see the result. John met him at the door, and forbade his entrance; Pendell blustered, and exclaimed, in a loud voice, that he would enforce his rights by the law, if necessary, as the sole heir of his father; John produced the will, and stated its contents; Pendell furiously pronounced it a forgery; John called upon the surrogate, whom he saw present, to examine it; that officer did so, and pronounced it to be perfectly genuine and lawful; Pendell danced about like a madman, uttering all kinds of frightful oaths and menaces, and shaking his fist in John's face, till John, patient as he was, could bear it no longer—and then he quietly knocked Mr. Pendell down. You may be sure the people were glad enough to see the scoundrelly bully so badly cowed, as he was by that blow; he slunk off, and from that day he has never been seen in the neighborhood. If the Lord has spared his worthless life this long, I don't think he will ever venture to make his appearance here again; the law-officers would be glad to get hold of him.

I want to add just one thing more about this great business; that is, my belief that whether the old man was dead or alive when he spoke, it was nothing less than divine providence that opened his mouth to tell his secret.

HOW MARION GOT HIS RIFLES.

BY JAMES D. M'CABE, JR.

THE close of the year 1780 was a sad period for America. The victories in the Eastern and Middle States had been more than counterbalanced by the failures of the continental commanders in the South. Charleston had fallen, Gates had been defeated at Camden, and the greater part of the Carolinas was held in rigid subjection by the British. Marion and Sumter, it is true, had caused the redcoats considerable annoyance, but the people of the South languished under a cruel and bitter tyranny. The war was conducted with savage ferocity. The tories hung their prisoners, and the patriots retaliated on the tories. The British burned the dwellings of the patriots, pillaged their barns, ravaged their fields, and set free their negroes. The Americans shot down sentinels at their posts, cut off pickets, and made the British officers especially feel the weight of their wrath. Neither party regarded the sacredness of flags of truce. Private revenge entered deeply into the contest. At the taking of Georgetown, an American lieutenant sought out and murdered an English officer who had once done him an injury. A sergeant, whose private baggage had been captured, sent word to the British commander that, if it was not

returned, he would kill eight of that officer's men; and the plunder was given up, as it was known he would keep his word. Greene, himself, declared that the war was one of butchery; but, however this may have been, it was but another proof of the stern determination of the American people to be free.

The British held the country from Charleston to the upper Santee, and in order to complete their conquest had established a chain of posts throughout the State, each of which was strongly fortified and defended by a good garrison. The tory element being very strong in the Carolinas, many of the people of those States joined the British, and organized what were known as "loyal legions," and which are known to us of the present day chiefly by the records of their cruelties. Against these "loyalists," or "tories," the vengeance of the patriot forces was especially directed, and many are the traditions of horror and crime which these outrages and retaliations have handed down to us.

Organized resistance to the British there was none. The struggle at this time was confined to the warfare I have above described, and on the American side the principal actors in the struggle were the men who composed

the famous "light brigade" of General Marion. These men rose so suddenly that it seemed to the enemy almost like the work of magic. In every direction around the British posts, they suddenly appeared in arms. They had no weapons, but the huge saws of the timber mills were fashioned into sabres. They had no camp equipage—the green turf was their bed, and the blue sky their covering. They flocked to Marion in crowds. Mounted on fleet horses, they travelled the country under him, often marching sixty miles between sundown and daybreak, striking blows now here, now there, until the perplexed enemy scarcely knew which way to turn, and began to regard, with nameless fear, this mysterious foe, who, if followed, could never be caught, but who was always at hand, with his terrible shout and charge, when least expected.

The favorite rendezvous of Marion was at Snow Island. This is a piece of high river swamp, as it is called in the Carolinas, and was surrounded on three sides by water, so as to be almost impregnable. He rendered it more so by destroying the bridges, securing the boats, and placing defences where they were required. The island, thus cut off from the main land, was of some extent, and abounded with game. No one unacquainted with its labyrinths could have well found his way among its tortuous paths, overgrown with a luxuriant tropical vegetation, and tangled with vines. Here Marion had his camp. From this fastness he issued forth at pleasure to ravage the enemy's granaries, or capture a straggling party of his troops. Secure in his retreat, he had no fear of pursuit. The British never knew where to find him, yet he never failed to deal them some terrible blow when they least expected it, to remind them that the avenger was still on their track. The British commander was in despair. All his offers of reward had failed to produce one single traitor in the American ranks, and all his expeditions which had started out to capture Marion with such high hopes of success, had been driven back in disgrace and disaster.

In the city of Charleston, the despotism of the British was at its height; the proud-spirited people of that capital were held down by a grinding tyranny. Many of them were still open and uncompromising in their hostility to the English, while others, thinking they could best serve the cause in that way, affected a hearty submission to the conquerors, and were seemingly the most loyal of all

King George's subjects. Yet, while the English saw this and congratulated themselves upon the good effect it would have on the colonists, these very loyalists kept the American commanders constantly informed of all that passed within the British lines, and many a disaster of the English was in this way directly attributable to them.

One of these persons was a lady of fine social position, and great wealth. Indeed, there were few persons in all Charleston over whose submission to the crown the British were more elated, than they were over that of Mrs. Anne Garden. She was a young and beautiful widow, just twenty-five, and for several years had been the standing toast of the beaux of the Carolinas. When the British took the city, she was one of the first to submit to the king, and since then her house had been the favorite gathering-place of the red-coat gentry. It was said that the commander of the post, himself, was more than half in love with her, and certain it was that a good portion of that worthy's time was passed in the society of the lady. Many of Mrs. Garden's friends, who were stanch patriots to the last, quietly cut her acquaintance, and shook their heads in silent indignation when her name was mentioned, and when they dared speak at all it was only to condemn the fair widow's treachery. In the camp of Marion, however, there was one cheek that kindled with pride and not with shame when the lady's name was mentioned; and as for General Marion himself, he could have told tales that would have startled the widow's Charleston friends, had it been safe to do so.

While Marion was creating so great an excitement beyond the gates of Charleston, the city itself was comparatively quiet. Mrs. Garden and her British admirers voted it insufferably dull, and, to vary the monotony, the widow resolved to give a ball. Preparations were made on an extensive scale, and the loyal element of the city was in high feather. The splendid mansion of the young widow was dressed with flowers from cellar to garret, and blazed with lights on the evening appointed for the assembly, and the band of the garrison discoursed sweet music to the assembled crowd. Mrs. Garden, radiant in her beauty, had been singled out by the British commander, who devoted himself to her all the evening. Never had the young woman been more beautiful and fascinating, and never had the gallant Colonel Watson been more in love.

The entertainment was at its height, when the crowd near the door suddenly parted, and a young man came forward hurriedly. He was tall and splendidly-formed, and carried himself erect with a proud, martial air. He was dressed in the uniform of an officer of the tory legion, and his general appearance was that of a man who had ridden far and hard during the day. As the young widow saw him, her face flushed and then grew deathly pale, and she sprang forward with a cry of alarm.

"What are you doing here?" she asked, hurriedly.

"You will see," he answered, quickly, in a low tone. "Only, for Heaven's sake, swear black and blue to what I may say!" Then he added, calmly, and in a louder tone, "You see, my dear cousin, I have come back to my allegiance."

"I am delighted to hear it," she replied, warmly, taking the hint at once. "I never thought your heart would cling to the rebel cause."

"Faith," he said, laughing, "if my heart had clung to it, my stomach would have driven me from it. I'm not fond of starving, my fair cousin, and King George lives well, you know. Hereafter, Thomas Wilson lives and dies a loyal man."

Colonel Watson had been standing by, during this conversation, watching the couple closely. Now he stepped forward to the lady's side.

"Who is this gentleman?" he asked, somewhat sharply. "He seems wonderfully familiar."

"O," replied the lady, laughing, "he is my cousin, Lieutenant Thomas Wilson, and, as you will perceive, is in his majesty's service."

"You seem rather careless of your dress, considering the occasion, sir," said the colonel, tartly. He was annoyed at the great interest which the lady had shown in the new-comer.

"My business must be my excuse, colonel," said the young man, respectfully. "I am the bearer of a letter from Major Gainey, and my orders are to lose no time in delivering it. I have ridden hard all day, sir, and upon reaching your headquarters learned of your presence here. This lady being my cousin, I felt no hesitation in coming here at once, trusting for pardon to the urgency of my mission."

As he spoke, he handed to the colonel a sealed letter. Watson took it hastily, and

broke the seal. As he read it, a smile of satisfaction overspread his features.

"This is very good," he said, gleefully. "Gainey is picking up recruits by the hundreds. Wants four hundred rifles, fifty sabres and some ammunition at once. Will I send them? To be sure, I will. Have you wagons, lieutenant?"

"No sir," replied the young man. "Major Gainey was afraid to send them down. There's no knowing when or where one may meet that cursed Swamp Fox and his sneaking cutthroats."

"Very good," said the colonel. "I'll furnish you with four wagons, and a guard of fifty mounted men. You will start at sunrise in the morning, lieutenant. Call at my quarters at midnight, and you shall have the necessary orders. Now, sir, you had better take some rest, as you will need it."

"First let me offer him some refreshments," said the widow, quickly. "He is tired and hungry, I know, and no guest must leave my house in such a state."

"Return quickly, then," said the colonel. "I shall be miserable while you are gone."

The young man offered his arm to the lady, and they left the ball-room; but instead of going to the dining-room, she led him straight to her chamber, and then locking the door, said, anxiously:

"For Heaven's sake, Charles, what is the meaning of this?"

The young man did not answer verbally, but catching her to his breast, kissed her passionately, and, to be frank, the young widow did not resist him. It was all very natural, however, for you know, dear reader, they were only cousins.

"It means," he said, at last, in reply to her repeated question, "that we want arms, and I have come for them."

What else they said matters not now; but before they separated, Mrs. Garden seemed very well satisfied with the young man's explanation. They then repaired to the supper-room, where the lieutenant found ample refreshments, and the lady returned to the ball-room, where Colonel Watson was impatiently awaiting her.

At midnight the lieutenant called at headquarters, and, faithful to his promise, Colonel Watson was there. The necessary orders for the delivery of the arms and ammunition and wagons to Lieutenant Thomas Wilson, of the "loyal legion," were made out, and the colonel also placed in the young man's hands

a sealed letter of instructions to Major Gainey. The rest of the night was spent in procuring the desired articles, and at sunrise the next morning, Lieutenant Wilson with his wagons and their contents, escorted by a guard of fifty men, set out for the "High Hills of Santee," where the tory major's headquarters were located. The young man had been surprised at the promptness with which Colonel Watson met the request for arms. He had expected to be cross-questioned, and subjected to a rigid examination by the British commander, who would reasonably be wary of every stranger, in such uncertain times. Under ordinary circumstances, the colonel would doubtless have pursued such a course, but he was influenced in his conduct on this occasion, by a weakness from which even the best and bravest of soldiers are not always free. As I have said, he was very much in love with the pretty widow, and the manner in which she had received the young lieutenant had alarmed him, and made him fearful that it was an indication of something more than a mere cousinly feeling. He was naturally of a jealous disposition, and was, as such persons usually are, quick and impulsive. He had no idea of allowing the handsome young stranger to remain near the lady a moment longer than was necessary, and he seized, with delight, upon the opportunity afforded him of getting rid of him by a prompt compliance with the request of which the young man was the bearer. Therefore he exerted himself to despatch the business at once, and start the young man on his return the next morning. This was the true cause of the colonel's conduct, and the keen wits of the Widow Garden at once detected it, but the young lieutenant vainly cudgelled his brains to account for it.

The wagons and their escort made good time, and by sunset were forty miles from Charleston. The sun was scarcely half an hour high, when Lieutenant Wilson ordered a halt, for the purpose of camping for the night. The mounted men fastened their horses to the trees, and removing their saddles, prepared to cook their evening meal; the teams were unhitched from the wagons, and the command busied themselves in preparations for a comfortable night. Every one was busy, and no one noticed that while

these arrangements were in progress, Lieutenant Wilson had drawn off from the party, and disappeared in the woods that bordered the road. Suddenly there was a crackling in the brushwood, which caused the British troopers to spring to their feet in alarm. As they did so, a voice, which sounded not unlike that of the young lieutenant, shouted, loudly: "Surrender, or you are all dead men!"

The surprise was complete. The British snatched their arms and made a show of resistance, but one volley from the hidden riflemen in the woods, which stretched a dozen redcoats on the ground, decided the matter, and the rest threw down their arms and cried for mercy, while the bold troopers of Marion's brigade emerging from their ambush surrounded them, and received their surrender. The redcoats were not much surprised to receive this sudden visit from the Swamp Fox, for they had dreaded it ever since they left Charleston; but they were astonished to see the lieutenant who had led them from the city, mingling with their captors as an officer of the famous light brigade.

General Marion secured his prisoners, together with the arms, ammunition, wagons and horses, and set out, after a rest of a few hours, for "Snow Island." At the request of the bogus Lieutenant Wilson, he sent back one of the redcoats to Charleston with a note to Colonel Watson, informing him of the trick that had been played on him by the young officer—who so far from being a lieutenant in the tory legion, was none other than the famous Charles Hampton, a Captain in Marion's brigade, who had planned and carried out the affair successfully—thanking the colonel for the excellent weapons and other materials he had sent him, and promising to do good service with them.

The British commander was furious when he read the note, and saw the hoax of which he had been the victim. He went in haste to Mrs. Garden, but the fair widow had sailed for England. He was compelled to swallow his mortification in silence, and a few years later, when the war was over, his chagrin was not a little increased by the tidings which reached him, that Mrs. Garden had married the young officer who had tricked him out of his rifles.



HOW PAUL DUNNING GOT THE COTTAGE.

BY EARL MARBLE.

"WELL, it's all over with me," said Paul Dunning, as he threw himself, with a sigh, into the large rocking-chair before the fire.

"What's the matter, Paul?" asked a cheery voice close to him, as a bustling little figure stopped midway in the room, and gazed at him with large, affectionate blue eyes.

"Why, that money," continued he, with a heavy sigh, unwinding his comforter from about his neck, and unbuttoning his great-coat "It's all gone to the deuce, and what's to be done next I don't know. But we will have to leave here; that's pretty certain. An unfortunate speculation. I believe that Jones is an infernal scoundrel. He's duped me for the purpose of lining his own pocket. If I knew that such was the case, I'd—"

"Hush, Paul!" exclaimed the other, in tones of gentle rebuke. "Please don't go on so. You are dreadfully discomposed. Now calm yourself, please, while you take off your overcoat and get warm; and I will take up the supper. Then you shall tell me all about it."

Paul Dunning was an everyday sort of man, holding a medium-salaried situation as book-keeper in the city, and had been for some months residing in a pretty little cottage in the suburbs. He was not married; but his sister kept house for him, and they lived in a very happy way.

A few months prior to this time, Paul had advanced six or seven hundred dollars, all he had in the world, and which he had been some years in saving, for the purpose of making a little speculation. This he had been induced to do on the recommendation of a person whom he had met occasionally, and who assured him that it was perfectly safe, and likely to prove very lucrative. But circumstances now seemed to indicate that this person, George Goodwin by name, had been one of a gang of swindling speculators, and that he had induced Paul to invest his money, knowing that he would never again see a cent of it. Report said that he had victimized several others also, and that of course he got a good share of the profits himself.

So matters stood when Paul returned home that night. He had just heard the news whispered, and it not only was a serious loss to him, but it made him very angry that George

Goodwin had played him so detestable a trick. He could endure the ordinary ups and downs of business; but when a man who made professions of friendship only used that as a cover for the foulest designs, and did not hesitate to tell downright lies, Paul felt that his patience was not equal to the task of holding out when thus assailed.

Paul also had another reason for regretting the loss just at that time. When he had moved into the cottage, it had been with the intention of buying it as soon as he could lay by a little more, so as to pay about a third down, letting the rest lay on mortgage until such time as he could pay it all up. He had had this chance offered him by the guardian of the young lady who owned the place, whose parents had recently left her an orphan, with this among other property descending to her. This place she wished to sell, thinking to use the money in some other way. Paul hoped, with strict economy, to be able to pay, at the end of the year, a thousand dollars, and thus secure a home for himself and sister, where no landlord could bully or threaten.

Paul felt the disappointment keenly when he came home that evening, and it is no wonder he indulged in a little of that petulance that his sister rebuked in so kindly a manner.

At the tea-table he told her all, with more indignant comments. Ruth paid no attention to Paul's feverish impatience, but simply said:

"Well, Paul, we shall get along. I do not fear for the future. You have a fine salary, and this will be a lesson that will guard you against such persons and schemes another time."

"O!" was the reply, "I know all that. We can live well enough, of course; but I had set my heart so on having this house, not only so I could have something of my own, but because it is really quite cheap. To think that that rascal—"

"But can you not still have it?" queried the sister. "You can pay less down, I should think, and still satisfy Mr. Thornton."

"No; he will not let me have it for less than a thousand down."

"But could you not borrow it?"

Paul here gave a little bit of an ironic laugh, that showed how bitterly he felt.

"Borrow it," he echoed. "Ruth, I have a good many friends, but it is astonishing how little money they would have if I should ask for a loan. As good a character as I have for uprightness and steadiness, I doubt if I could raise fifty dollars. Besides, Ruth, we must look at it in a business way. Even if I should be able to borrow it, you must recollect that not only that must be paid during the year, but interest on the mortgage that remains, as well as a portion of the principal."

The next day Paul called on Mr. Thornton, and after sounding him, and getting his views, he told him that he had met with losses, and did not think he should be able to take the house at the end of the year, and pay a thousand dollars down, as he had expected.

"Well," the gentleman simply said, and paused for the young man to proceed.

"You would not be willing to give me another year's time to make my arrangements in, would you? I think I could arrange it by that time."

His voice positively trembled in speaking these words, so intense was his anxiety.

"I will see," said Mr. Thornton, looking keenly at Paul, as though he would read every delineation of character in his face. Then, evidently seeing nothing but that which was honest and honorable, he added, "it is very doubtful, but you can call in a few days."

After leaving Mr. Thornton's office, and while pursuing his way very leisurely to the store, with his head bowed in deep meditation, he was suddenly startled by a soft hand clasping his own, and a sweet voice saying:

"Why, Mr. Dunning! how do you do? It is almost an age since I have seen you."

Paul returned the greeting cordially, and almost forgot his misery, gazing at the bright face looking into his own.

"But what is the matter with you?" she continued, presently. "What makes you look so disheartened? You almost make me feel like crying for sympathy."

Paul reddened a little at this plain question. Somehow, he did not want Grace Morrow to know the exact reason of his gloominess. To tell the truth, he was more than half inclined to love her, and more than once had been on the point of asking her to become his wife.

"O, it is nothing of consequence," he answered, a little untruthfully, feeling a slight quake of conscience as he met those clear eyes bent upon his own.

They had been walking along the street all this time, and now, looking up, Paul discovered

that they were near the entrance to a picture gallery, and, impelled by an impulse he could not resist, drew the fair girl to one side, and they entered the gallery.

Here they found themselves quite alone, and for a few moments they gave themselves up to the beauties around them. But soon Grace returned to the previous subject.

"You have not told me yet what made you look so gloomy when I met you," she said, simply, looking at him archly.

Paul then told her, but not the whole story. He said that he and his sister had been keeping house some time in a little cottage that they liked much; but that it was about being sold, and they did not know where they could get one that would suit them so well. Then, somehow, he grew more communicative, and before he knew it, he had told her of his loss, which weighed heavily on his mind. She laughed over the subject a little, and then spoke sympathizingly, till poor Paul was in a fever of perplexity.

They sat on a sofa placed in front of one of the principal paintings on exhibition, and had gazed on its beauties some time in silence, till suddenly, in a burst of enthusiasm, Paul, who had for a few moments gazed less intently upon the picture in front than at his side, turning to Grace, and seizing her hand, said:

"Grace, do you know the greatest cause of the regret I feel for my little loss?"

"No," she replied, a little uneasily, trying at first to remove her hand from his grasp, but which he still retained. "How should I?"

"Do you wish to know?"

Grace's face was scarlet. She suddenly seemed to realize what was coming.

"I will tell you, Grace," he went on, without receiving an answer from her. "I love you better than life itself, and it seems to place our happiness further from realization."

For an instant, Grace was a little taken aback at the suddenness of all this, as well as at Paul's audacity, for she had ideas of her own of how such a momentous question should be put; but she crowded aside the little rebuking exclamation that first came to her lips, and simply said:

"Why should it, Paul?"

It was his turn now to be astonished. He did not expect Grace to accept his proposal as though it had long been settled between them. But he did not suffer his wonder to be seen. For only an instant he paused. Then he said:

"Why should it, do you ask? Because I

feel that I shall be cramped for so many months to get another start."

"And is that all?" was the reply. "But suppose it should have exactly the contrary effect?"

"I do not understand you."

"Then I shall explain no further," she said, conscious that she was going just a little too far. "What a beautiful hand that mermaid has!" she continued, changing the subject suddenly, pointing to another painting which stood a little to one side.

"Not so pretty as this one," said Paul, giving the one he still held a gentle pressure. "Tell me when I shall call it all my own," he continued. "It is as easy to get a house for three as it is for two."

Strange to say, Paul knew very little of the person he had just asked to be his wife. He had first met her at the house of a friend in the city, and afterward at several gatherings of literary persons and other artists, besides a number of mixed assemblies. He had never asked particularly about her, and had never learned anything more than that she was an orphan, and lived with a widowed aunt. More than this he seemingly cared not to know, inasmuch as each seemed to have made a great impression on the other from the first. The acquaintance had been going on for a couple of years, and probably Paul had not called on her to exceed a dozen times. But here he was declaring himself, and she as good as accepting him.

So, before they left the gallery, a day not far in the future was set for the marriage, and each went out with new emotions swelling their breasts.

"Well, Ruth," said Paul, going into the sitting-room that evening, "I suppose I've made a fool of myself, dear; but somehow I couldn't help it."

Then he told her of his engagement, and when the marriage was proposed to come off.

"Who is the lady?" was Ruth's simple query.

"O, I forgot that part of my story. You recollect the Miss Morrow that we met at Loring's?"

"Yes."

"She is a jewel, Ruth."

"She had a sweet face as well as ways. I hope you will be happy, Paul."

Going into Mr. Thornton's office a few days later, that gentleman blandly told him, that, upon a consultation with the owner of the house, they had decided not to let him have

it upon the proposed terms. In fact, there was some doubt about the place yet, but Mr. Dunning would be expected to vacate it at the expiration of his quarter.

The next time Paul met Miss Morrow, he told her of it, but Grace only replied:

"I am glad of it, Paul. I may as well tell you now what I was about to make myself forward enough to tell before matters were agreed on between us."

"Well?"

"I am far from rich, Paul; but I own a little house, left me by my poor father, which I understand is soon to be vacated, and which I will have fitted up for our occupation."

Paul's face flushed a little as he asked:

"What part of the city is it in?"

"It is not in the city at all."

"Ah! in the country? So much the better. I like the country. It is the only place to live. I live in the country, you know."

"Yes. By the way, this is in the same town, I believe, you have told me you are in."

"How fortunate! I shall not, then, have far to move. What street is it on?"

"Mercer."

"I don't recollect the name. I have not been there a great while, you know."

A fortnight before the wedding, as Paul called one day to see Grace, she said:

"Have you seen that house of ours yet, Paul?"

"No; I have done nothing about it. I have been very busy. If I had known where the street was, I might have run by some day; but I thought I would wait, and go with you for a pilot."

"Suppose we go to-morrow? I didn't intend to go till the present occupants left it; but, somehow, it takes them an everlasting while. I don't believe they'll get out till they see our things at the very door."

So the next day Paul and Grace went to see their house. After getting off the train, they started down the main street, Grace leading the way, and soon turned into the very street that Paul now lived in. Presently they came opposite, and Paul saw Ruth sitting at the window. He was about to tell Grace that that was where he lived now, when she suddenly stopped, and looked proudly over the pretty white fence, saying:

"There, Paul, this is the place. Isn't it a beauty? I think it is the prettiest—"

"This is the place!" echoed Paul. "Why, this is where I live now."

He was about to say more, but a glance at

Grace's features made him hesitate for a moment.

"You live here now?" she said.

"Yes."

"And didn't you really know, all the time, that I owned it?"

"No. Upon my honor."

"Didn't you mistrust when I told you the name of the street?"

"You said it was on Mercer street, and this is—"

"Why, it is Mercer!" exclaimed Grace, looking very much puzzled.

"O no! You are surely mistaken. There is the name, 'Cherry,' upon that post, you see."

Grace looked, and could hardly believe her eyes. An old man came up the walk just then, and she asked him where Mercer street was.

"There aint no such street now, ma'am," he said, respectfully. "This 'ere used to be

Mercer; but they changed the name some four or five years ago."

"I knew it used to be Mercer street," she said, half-spitefully, and then turned to Paul with a pleasant smile on her face.

"It does take this family an everlasting while to move," said he, presently, remembering her words of the day before. "I believe, Grace, you were something of a prophet when you said you didn't believe they would move till they saw our things at the door."

She only smiled at him again; a radiant smile, that made him wish to take her in his arms, and shout out to all the passers-by how he loved her.

"So, Paul," said Ruth, that night, as they sat at the tea-table, "so you are going to have the cottage, after all?"

"It was singular, wasn't it?" he said, after three minutes of almost total silence, during which time he noiselessly stirred his coffee.

That was all the reply he made.

HOW THE CORN GREW.

BY GEORGE H. COOMER.

"Bless me! isn't it warm?" exclaimed Aunt Margaret, flinging her handkerchief to the discomfort of sundry winged insects trying to effect a lodgment on her rather fine-looking nose; for Aunt Margaret had been very handsome in her youthful days, and was still remarkably fair; her nasal organ being just such a member as infallibly belongs to people whom nature seems to have created under a written contract. She had still a sweet-looking mouth, and its even rows of teeth reminded me of a small sunflower broken in two before its seeds have lost their whiteness. So much for Aunt Margaret.

"It will be an uncomfortable night," she continued; "and of all things, I object to hot nights, when the little barbed particles that have all day been taking possession of one are stealing their way out against the grain. I can endure the flood-tide of heat, but I do protest against the ebb!"

"Never mind," remarked Cousin John, "it will be a great night for corn-growing. Ours grew four inches last night, to say the least."

"Four inches!" cried little Charlie, who went to Miss Primrose's school, and tormented all the household with fractions, "that's sixteen forty-eighths of a foot—Miss Primrose says so—you never ought to say inches."

"Well," continued John, "I heard it snap as if every stalk was trying to take the lead of the family. Corn keeps awake all night, you know."

"And so do I," laughed Aunt Margaret, "such nights as these; though from a different cause, possibly. I suppose the corn is not so sensitive to mosquito bites as I am; besides, I fight too fierce a battle with the heat to allow of my growing very fast; then there is always an army with trumpets above my head, every

little villain encouraging his file-leader to 'pitch in,' because I am so far gone that I cannot hurt them—at least, they think so. But speaking of corn-growing reminds me of a 'little story.' You know I was 'brought up,' as the saying is, at Uncle Raymond's. Your mother knows just what kind of a man Uncle Raymond was—don't you, Hannah?"

"Yes," said mother, "the laziest man alive. They did say he could never keep a whole pair of pants, because, when he went sauntering about, if he came to the top of a hill, rather than walk to the bottom, he would sit down and slide! You know lazy people take the most pains, and he would undergo all the labor of getting up, for the sake of the slide down!"

"I would have liked to witness that operation, it was so characteristic," said Aunt Margaret, with a merry light in her chestnut-colored eyes; "but I have seen him sit in a rocking-chair to thresh barley. What a figure he cut, I declare! sitting in his chair on the barn floor, in danger of pounding his own head off!"

"And you know, Margaret," said mother, "how he would sit on a cold winter's evening, with the snow blowing over his house as thick as ever the ashes did over Pompeii, burning the last stick of wood that he had out of the swamp, laughing, talking, and drinking cider, as unconsciously as if he had piles of fuel at the door."

"Yes," said Aunt Margaret, "and the next morning, when fairly driven to bestir himself, he would shoulder his axe, wallow through the snow-drifts to the woods, and bring up a stick or two on his shoulder. He had fifty acres of timber, but never provided wood while there was any warmth left in the ashes.

You know how Aunt Raymond used to scold? but, lor!—"

"Anything but a slack man?" said mother.

"Well, as I was saying," resumed Aunt Margaret, "I was brought up there. Uncle Raymond was always kind to me; he never was unkind to any one. He would say 'yes' to all my propositions, because the saying 'no' would have involved the necessity of some explanation which he was too lazy to afford.

"Fannie Raymond and I were of the same age, and at sixteen we began to think ourselves entitled to beaux like other girls. Young men assumed the usual market value in our eyes; yet we affected fastidiousness. We made fun of Bill Watkins, ostensibly because he wore long hair, but really because he went home with Ruth Ryder, instead of us, one dark Sunday evening from church. But the poor fellow was frightened enough, as it was—having to go home with a girl—so we ought to have pitied him. We ridiculed Tom Collins for his big feet, yet either of us would have jumped to get him, feet and all. And we laughed about Dan Weaver because he was so bashful. I remember his coming for a pair of overshoes that his mother had left at our house. He was overwhelmed by our presence, and so terribly confused! 'These are those, are they not?' said he, taking up the articles, and making a desperate attempt at refined English.

"Yes," said Fannie, "them's um!"

"To a bashful swain, a maid of sixteen is a dreadful creature; and I suppose poor Dan Weaver tormented himself for many a day with thinking what he might have said, and didn't.

"One day, in the hottest part of summer, we heard that Julia Walker was to have a party. We were invited. Of course, no beaux came to escort us; they would have been scared at the idea. Julia Walker lived about a mile off, away across the fields, and we started before sunset.

"You know all about this going across lots. Here was a stone wall, there a pair of bars; here a hucklebury lot, and there a field of corn; here an old, white-faced bay horse, there a 'cow, with crumpled horns,' in the act of lying down under a great button-wood, and heaving a deep breath of satisfaction, as her body came plump upon the ground. Then there were broad-horned oxen, fighting the flies—(Philip, of Mount Hope, kept his powder in just such a horn as these noble brutes might have furnished; and looking at them, I

thought of Annawan's present to Captain Church,")—said aunt, parenthetically.

"As we neared the house, a great yellow dog barked at us, and we climbed upon a wall overhung with quince bushes, scattering a score or two of shanghaes, ducks and turkeys, hardly more scared than ourselves. Presently we heard Julia's voice calling 'Banquo!' She ran towards us with a ringing laugh, the poultry following at her heels, and the great dog shaking his ears and capering all around her.

"Evening came, and with it numerous belles and beaux. How queerly the country lads had primmed up for the occasion! looking in their ill-fitting 'store clothes,' like wooden men. Women dress by instinct; but a man knows nothing about the use of clothes."

"Why, Aunt Margaret?"

"It is the truth. A country bean will get into his Sunday coat as he would into a hallow log; and it sets about as well on him; but a woman's dress is a part of herself.

"Well, we danced, played, and of course, flirted. The youngest water-fowl could swim, and we could flirt. Some of the girls were romps; others were mincing creatures, whom the boys were at first afraid of; for man is little skilled in woman's nature, and does not like risking much until he has drawn the enemy's fire. The most prim little miss of all was Clara Harper. She looked with disdain upon most of the farmers' sons, because her father kept a grocery, and sold molasses. One of the amusements consisted in our trying to guess what article in the room was indicated by an initial letter which one of the party might give; and in one instance Miss Clara gave W. K. We guessed in vain, and upon our giving it up, Clara informed us that W. K. stood for window curtain!

"But we had been charged to return early; and now came an hour of trial. The girls flitting about in quest of sundry light articles of dress, and whispering smart things to each other, controlled their fluttering spirits better than did the boys theirs. The latter stood trembling and nervous. It is hard to wait inactive for danger. Of all human beings the young male of the human species is most awkward in making approaches to the female. In one way and another, however, we all secured escorts. Bill Rogers shying off with Emily Watson, and walking sideways, as if he feared somebody was going to kick him, and Jack Archer and Tom Morris coming with Fannie and me.

"We set out across lots, and had accomplished half the distance home, before Tom ventured to ask if I would accept his arm; but we could not keep step, and as the path was uneven, our shoulders knocked together like two corks in a wash-tub. Fannie's beau was not so valiant. He went stumbling along about six feet from her. He had shown much fortitude at the party, but was unequal to this new ordeal. It shook his courage—away out doors with a girl, and nothing to say!

"Having crossed Uncle Raymond's pasture, we came to the cornfield adjoining the house; and our escort were gallantly letting down the bars, when a shrill scream from Fannie startled us; and looking off to the right, close by the pasture wall, we saw the most horrid object that you can imagine. It looked like a gigantic man, with an immensely long face; and I thought it had great scaly wings, like something in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

"Our beaux were no longer the awkward creatures they had been; and Tom Morris ran so violently as to hit himself with his heels, which frightened him almost to death. "There comes a brickbat!" he bellowed, as he fled like the 'wind-swift Cupid.' Fannie and I followed with the fleetness of rabbits; *stumbling over corn-hills, getting blows across the face from the great stalks, and feeling as if a hand of ice was ready to clutch us by the shoulder.* Our 'protectors,' reaching the edge of the field, darted at full run for their homes, while we fled to our chamber.

"It was the warmest night of the whole summer, and between heat, exertion and fright, it seemed to me that there would be little remaining of us by morning. For a good while we lay and talked about the apparition, but at length fell asleep. Uncle and Aunt Raymond occupied an adjoining room, and about daybreak we were awakened by hearing them talking rather earnestly with each other.

"There, James," we heard Aunt Raymond say, "don't you hear it? Something's in the corn. Do get up and see!"

"O fudge!" he answered, "it's only the corn growing. I tell you it always snaps so in hot weather. There, do you hear that? It jumped half an inch then. That'll be stout corn if this weather holds on."

"Fannie and I heard it too—'snap, snap, snap!'—and thought of the spectre in the pasture—was he indeed coming? We could imagine him striding through the corn, his fearful head overtopping the tallest spindles.

We lay a moment trembling, and then heard Uncle Raymond commence snoring.

"The corn snapped louder than ever.

"I tell you, James, there's something in that corn!" persisted aunt; and we could hear her punch him with her elbow—"wake up! wake up!"

"Uncle yawned, and spoke impatiently: 'What, would you have me get up at midnight to see the corn grow? I can hear it; that's enough. When corn snaps like that, farmers can afford to sleep. Do keep quiet!"

"Midnight, indeed! it's broad daylight," returned aunt, "and I'm sure there's something in the corn, too. Well, if he aint sound asleep again!—Fannie!"

"What, ma?"

"Did you and Margaret put up the cornfield bars when you came through last evening?"

"No, ma; we saw something that frightened us, and ran as fast as we could."

"Aunt Raymond's bed gave one prodigious creak, and then her feet struck the floor. Slipping on her dress and shoes, she ran down stairs and into the yard.

"Patrick! Patrick!" we heard her call, under the hired man's window.

"Sure, an' what is it, mum?"

"There's a whole herd of cattle in the corn—come down, quick!"

"An' d'ye tell me so! Indade, mum, an' I'll be wid ye!" and down went Pat, his hair looking like a birch broom. We girls, as some atonement for our great guilt, joined in the chase, and there was a general uproar.

"Whoo! whooroosh! out wid yez, yer thrampin' sons iv the devil!" shouted Pat, as the herd went crashing through the corn. There were four oxen, seven cows, nine young cattle and the old white-faced horse, who, throwing up his head, with a long cornstalk in his mouth, started at a trot for the bars, followed by his twenty companions.

"We had the curiosity to approach the pasture, in quest of the apparition. There was nothing upon the spot which could have caused our fright, and we were as much perplexed as ever.

"Faix, thin, an' it must have been the ould divil himself," suggested Patrick, when he had heard our story. "He knowed ye would lave down the bars wid the fright, an' thin he could dhrive the cattlle into the corrund!"

"But this hypothesis seemed hardly reasonable, since the devil could have let down the bars for himself. So we returned to the house

as wise as we were before. Uncle Raymond did not take the loss of his corn much to heart. He remarked that there would be less to harvest, a saying which aside from its undeniable truth, had, from his lips, a peculiar significance. His heaven was a place where there is nothing to do.

"The adventure of that night proved of incalculable advantage to our rustic beaux, giving them material for conversation; and when we next met, the 'weather' was held only as a reserve corps. They had had a subject before which their timidity in our presence fled away; and though a little ashamed of their cowardice, they felt relief in the thought that they had seen something of which they were more afraid than of us."

"But, Aunt Margaret, what was it that frightened you? Did you ever know?"

"O, I had liked to have forgotten. Well,

one day in huckleberry-time we went out in the pasture. Old Billy, the white-faced horse, was lying down behind some trees. On seeing us he started up, sitting upon his haunches, like a dog, and seeming taller than a man. I have since observed that horses of 'a certain age' frequently get in this position; but Billy looked absolutely frightful, and in a moment I saw how the old fellow had duped us on that unfortunate night. In this position, seen by moonlight, sitting so erect, with ears pointing skyward, like horns, he must have looked like anything but a horse.

"But I mean!—whew! how warm it is getting! And these wretched mosquitos! How is any one to sleep? If your corn don't grow another four inches to-night, John, or sixteen forty eighths of a foot, as Charlie would say, it never will!" concluded Aunt Margaret, with one of her gleeful smiles.



THE DERWENT EYES AND HAIR.

BY AMETHYST WAYNE.

PART IV.

CHAPTER VII.

LETITIA GREY had but one friend to call upon; and he came as speedily as the train could bring him, after the message reached him. He found her calmer than he had been led to expect from Mrs. Mertoun's account. She rose from her seat, and turned her pale face toward him, moving her lips tremulously before she could articulate the words.

"You have come, Neil, O, it is such a relief!"

Neil Northwood took the cold hands out stretched toward him.

"Tell me about this new calamity, Letitia. I am bewildered, and cannot think of any explanation."

In grave but steady accents she repeated all that Owen had said to her, and how he had left her on that memorable evening.

Neil sat with his head bent down to his shading hand.

"It is not likely this is a boyish freak. He would hardly run away, when he knew you were to gratify him. When this journey was promised for the coming day—" he commented.

"Run away! Owen run away from his mother!" ejaculated Mrs. Grey, indignantly, the first sob breaking down her voice.

"No, it is not likely, and he was too thorough an oarsman, too fearless and practised a swimmer, to have met any accident."

"Unless—unless—O, who could have had any ill will to him?—unless, Neil, there has been foul play."

And two shaking hands covered the poor mother's face that its foreboding horrors might not be seen.

"How could it be? I asked the people here, and they tell me he had never any quarrels. And his very appearance must have shown thieves there was no likelihood of plunder. If the man, Jake Mertoun, had paid him for the boat, and any of our London ruffians had been around— But now I am utterly puz-

zled. The worst of it is, that, if I give it into the hands of the police, it will drag you into publicity."

"No matter; find, O Neil, find my son for me!"

"I will do my best, Letitia. I hope you do not need any assurance of that. But that advertisement haunts me. What if he saw it, and went there? What if, somehow, it has come about that Roland Mabury recognizes him, or through his description suspects your identity; might not he detain him?"

Letitia Grey was staring into his face with wide, affrighted eyes.

"It might be," she said slowly, "but not of Owen's free will. The boy loves his mother; he would know what anxiety his absence would cause. He would send me word, if he did not come to me."

"But the word does not come, nor the lad either," repeated Neil.

"And that is what gives me such deadly fear. O Owen, Owen, where are you? where are you?"

"Try to be calm, Letitia."

"I do. I have held down my anguish and horror with a stern hand, that I might have strength to persevere in the search for him. But something, I cannot tell what it is, something seems to assure me he is living, but in great trouble, if not danger."

"Rest easy, if such a thing is possible in this suspense. I will leave nothing undone that man can do. The first thing shall be an advertisement, with his personal description. I will have handbills scattered along the river. As soon as I have sent it to the printer, I will take the boat and Jake Mertoun, and follow down the track Jake seems positive he took. The broken oarlock puzzles me, but we may find an explanation. Keep up your heart, my poor Letitia. Your trials are indeed heavy."

Mrs. Grey followed him to the door, watched him speaking with a knot of fishermen, and then go down the path toward the river; then turned back, and sat down beside the nicely-

packed trunk still standing in the room, leaning her weary head against the ceiling.

"The waters are very deep, very deep and wild around me," murmured she; "and yet I cling desperately to the one hope that can save, and bring me forth." "Surely, surely, since I have tried to bend meekly beneath the cross laid upon me, this last blow will be averted."

Neil Northwood, in the boat with Jake Mertoun, went gliding up the river toward Kingston. They hailed all the fishing-boats they met, to inquire if any one had seen or heard of a lad like Owen, but met no encouragement.

"We must turn, and look down, as the current would take him," said Neil at last, with a strong shudder, and he added between his teeth, "Hapless Letitia!"

"You think he's done for? I've been afraid of foul play, all the time," observed Jake, drawing his rough jerkin sleeve across his eyes; "it's a likely lad gone, that's all I can say."

Neil was eyeing the river banks gloomily.

"I am little versed in these matters. Would a body drift straight down toward London and the mouth of the river, or be likely to lodge in the curves of the bank?"

"It's hard telling. But if there's been foul play, such coves don't leave anything drifting to tell tales."

Neil Northwood shuddered again. A wretched, wretched picture rose before his mind's eye. That lithe, vigorous young form, stiff and helpless, drifting, surging to and fro with the waves, the handsome, boyish face, stark and white, the cheery brown eyes filmed and sightless, the curly locks tangled and dripping; and, deepest sting of all, was the remembrance of his secret dislike of the lad, his ready injustice to his noblest qualities, his quickness to perceive the traits he detested.

Slipping along now on the river, Neil Northwood took a secret vow to be more kind and sympathizing, should the lad be found at last; and as his thoughts reverted to the desolate mother, he was almost ready to wish he might change places with him wherever he might be; give Owen back to life and his mother's arms, and go himself, the lonely, friendless man, to the quiet, enduring rest beneath the lulling water.

Jake roused him from this mood, pointing over to the white turrets of Inglis Park.

"He looked mighty sharp over yonder, last night, when he brought me up the river to get

my money for the boat, and I remember now he said something about going there to look about. I told him I should maybe be gone two hours. It would take about that to row here and back, from where I agreed to meet him. There'd be no harm in asking if anybody seed him."

A little flicker of hope glimmered in Neil's grave eyes.

"Let us try it, at all events. Turn your boat thither."

They were soon at the landing-place. Jake leaped ashore, and looked about him with sharp, alert eyes.

All at once he darted forward, and pounced upon something in the bushes fluttering to and fro with the wind.

He brought it forward triumphantly.

"This ere looks like one of Owen's handkerchiefs. There's something in the corner. I'm a poor fisherman and can't read writing. See what you make of it."

"Good heavens! you are right. It is Owen's. It is Letitia's handwriting, and his initials. He has been here then," exclaimed Neil, shaking from head to foot with excitement. "Whose place is this, Jake?"

"It's Inglis Park, sir, and belongs to a little girl, every rood of it."

"The girl he saved from the river," exclaimed Neil, bitterly.

"She! you don't say so. And there was the noble gentleman a telling me about it, and it had gone clean out of my head. Why, it was he who was with me when I found the boat. It was he who was asking all about Owen."

"Who are you talking about?" demanded Neil, sternly.

"Lord Roland Mabury. He's the guardian, you see, for this dainty little miss, who owns the big house yonder. And he wanted to find Owen. He didn't know the name, but he described him out, so I knew in a minute."

"By Heaven! it is he who is keeping him. I will tear the boy from him, or post him in the street of London, for the villain that he is!"

"Hush! why it's the great Lord Roland Mabury you're talking about. And this ere is on the Inglis ground, and by George! there's some folks coming this way. What'll we do?"

"Stay where we are, and demand that boy," answered Neil Northwood fiercely, leaping out of the boat and standing erect and haughty, while a gentleman and two ladies came sauntering down the river avenue.

Belle Marmaduke's sharp eyes were the first to spy the intruders.

"Why, who have you here?" asked she, carelessly. Then she caught her breath quickly, and whirled about to face Lord Roland. "Look, my lord, as sure as my eyes serve me faithfully, there's the savage-looking man who glared at you so from the boat. And he's not improved in his humor, judging by his manner."

Lord Roland's eyes were bent thoughtfully to the ground. He lifted them with a sudden start, and as he met Neil Northwood's fierce glance he paled visibly, but otherwise kept his composure.

"Let us return to the house," said Maude. "I am sure the man is insane."

"Rather let us go forward, and learn his motives for coming hither," returned Belle, eagerly. "You see there is another man, a peaceable looking fellow, and Lord Roland is with us. Why should we be afraid?"

"Yes," said Lord Roland, "we had best go on. He may have brought the desired information from the boy who saved you, Maude."

But his face was still pale, and his lips pressed firmly together. He dropped the ladies from his arm, and went forward a little in advance, a peculiar expression on his face, half-sorrowful, half as beseeching forbearance.

Neil Northwood stood like a rock, and never moved his fiery eyes from the other's face.

"You have come to see Lady Maude in behalf of the lad who saved her life," began Lord Roland. "She will be very glad to hear from him."

"My errand is to you, Roland Mabury," exclaimed Neil, his voice hoarse with passion. "Have done with your miserable sophistry, and give me back the boy, thou double-dyed villain!"

Lord Roland stepped forward, and lifted up a deprecating hand.

"Neil, Neil," said he, in a quick, beseeching tone; "will you never be reasonable? Have you no charity, no pity?"

"Charity! pity! for one who has poisoned the very air I breathe, who has clouded my sky, blasted every green hope of my life! and saying that, is telling the least of your baleful influence. I could bear it for myself—but for another—Be still! the past is dead and gone, let it lie, waiting the judgment of the resurrection! It is the present wrong I come to right, Roland Mabury."

"The present? Neil, my poor Neil, have

you really lost your senses?" exclaimed Lord Roland, in a sorrowful voice.

"I want the boy, the boy who was with me in the boat. He is a relation of mine, you have no claim upon him. You shall not hide him from me."

"What boy?" ejaculated Lord Roland, in utter astonishment.

"You can simulate innocence for others, but you will not deceive me. He has been here. We have found his handkerchief. I swear to you I will have him from you, though I try the justice of every court in England!" retorted Neil, passionately.

Jake Mertoun stepped forward, pulling off his cap with an obsequious bow.

"It's the boy your lordship was asking about. You know we found the drifting boat. He's missing, your lordship, and his poor mother is well nigh crazed."

"The lad missing! I am grieved to hear it. But why do you come to me?" returned Lord Roland.

"The gentleman may know, I'm sure I can't see. But we found his handkerchief here, that's certain."

"Neil," said Lord Roland, with a voice tremulous with deep emotion, "in the name of our old friendship, give me credit at least for truthfulness. I know nothing about this boy's absence. You can learn by inquiry how diligently I have been seeking him. And if you would only listen to me, I could explain all of the past, so that you would pity, rather than blame me."

"The past is dead, leave it buried," answered Neil, harshly; "it is the boy I want!"

"I am very sorry. I will give you all the help possible. You say he is a relation of yours! We were all impressed by his gallant bearing, and noble face. We shall feel it keenly ourselves if harm has come to him."

Neil's piercing eyes had been searching his face. He turned to Jake with a groan.

"Let us go," he said; "the man knows nothing about him, and his presence is like a dagger to me."

"And what must yours be to me then, Neil?" exclaimed his lordship, bitterly. "Have you a heart of stone, remembering all I suffered, all I lost. What horrible torturing memory haunts every step I take! Neil, Neil, let us be friends again."

Neil Northwood struck fiercely at the outstretched hand.

"Never, never, in her name, never!"

A bitter, bitter sigh shook Lord Roland's

breast, and while Neil leaped into the boat beckoning fiercely for Jake to follow, his lordship walked back to the ladies with a gloomy face.

Maude had only caught a word here and there, but Belle Marmaduke's trained ear had gathered enough to give her the drifting of the whole conversation.

"Was the man really insane, Lord Roland?" asked she.

"No, not in the strict sense of the word, but something very like it in another," replied he, with a heavy sigh.

"What were they saying about a handkerchief?" questioned Maude, more to divert his thoughts, than from genuine curiosity.

"They found it here. It belongs, they say, to the lad who saved you, and he is strangely, unaccountably absent, missing. It is all a mysterious tangle."

"Perhaps he has gone on a journey," answered Maude, with a calm, confident smile. "When it is time for him, he will come."

Lord Roland did not answer. He was walking along with folded arms, lost in the most gloomy abstraction.

Belle watched him furtively, but spoke nothing of her exulting thoughts.

"So the paragon is in danger of exposure; the plot thickens, and I must look out to have my share in it."

Jake Mertoun, rowing vigorously, turned inquisitive glances upon the face of his companion, but read nothing beyond its black gloom.

"What is to be done now?" asked he, at length.

"I will go back to see his mother, and then hasten to London and put the case in the hands of a detective. If he is alive, we will find the lad if he is dead, we will know it," returned Neil.

"Look you here," said Jake, resting a moment on his oar. "I be no scholar, and make no pretence towards smartness, but I can tell a good man and a knave when I meet 'em; and it's mostly the last, I can tell you, I'm dealing with, take it all round. Yon's no villain, though you called him so; and he's as innocent of this here trouble as an unborn baby."

"How much do you know about it?" growled Neil, and pulled his hat down closer over his brows. Nevertheless the assertion only boldly declared the faint whisper in his own heart. There had been a touching sadness, a meek appeal in Lord Roland's manner,

which had started strange thoughts, old memories. How proud he had been once of that man's friendship! How he had loved him with an almost womanish devotion! And between then and now what hot surges of hate and wrath had scorched, and killed, and withered every vestige, as he believed, of kindly feeling! Was it possible there had been a mistake? Had he really wronged a noble, suffering soul?

But in another moment he drove the thought from him in bitter scorn. What chance was there for deception? What faintest room for doubt? No, he was a villain, the more detestable, because of this hypocritical cloak.

"Row away, Mertoun," said he, sternly. "You are only learned in the coarser wiles of the devil; I have seen something of his refinement and aristocracy."

Jake shook his head, and hunted up his tobacco, after which not a word was spoken on either side, until they were landed on the shore again.

The famous London police took hold of the affair with avidity, not so much, it must be admitted, by reason of the stern injunctions of the pale, savage-looking clerk, who came every morning for details, and went away with slow step and hanging head, but because secretly my Lord Roland emptied his purse into the chief's hand, and said:

"Persevere, search everywhere, and come to me whenever you need means to help you."

Squads of men were sent up the river as far as Owen's boat was known to have gone, and at untold expense they explored the mysteries of the muddy bottom, dredging in the shallows, and diving into the depths. Every bush-hung bank was shaken through, every conceivable hiding-place bared to the keen eyes of the searchers. Suspicious hangers-on were followed, tracked, watched day and night—all the wonderful, subtle, mysterious machinery of a trained police force set into noiseless motion. But the days dragged on into weeks, and the weeks slipped away into months, and Owen Grey's fate was still a profound mystery.

Letitia Grey bore it wonderfully. Some hidden force in her nature unfolded in this her great need, and gave her strength and calmness. But while all the rest of the interested searchers—all but one rather—had settled into the positive conviction of the lad's death, the undaunted mother held bravely to her first declaration, that Owen was alive—somewhere; somehow he was alive, and yearning

for his mother. Could a mother's heart be deceived? If it was set free from earthly bonds, would not her boy's spirit whisper some message to hers to relieve this agonizing suspense?

Neil heard her in respectful silence, but he only believed it a tender mother's delusion. The conclusion was irresistible. Even the police, trained to such steady perseverance, declared, though time might unravel the mystery, and some dying wretch might confess the crime hereafter, it was hopeless to look for the lad to be found alive. A development which came, some three weeks after the disappearance of the missing youth, strengthened such a conviction. Lady Maude came forward, and related what no one had suspected, her interview with Owen Grey on that memorable night. To be sure, she was reticent and guarded, but she was able to tell precisely what time it was when she entered the house. Lord Roland and Jake Mertoun knew very nearly the hour of the night when they found the empty boat. Whatever catastrophe had come then, had happened within half a mile of Inglis Park, either on the river or near lying land, and Maude had been the last to see him.

Lady Maude shared Mrs. Grey's conviction. "He told me he might start in the morning upon a long journey," she said. "There was something mysterious in his allusion to it. I think he has gone, and that when it is right, we shall see him back again."

Lord Roland, in no wise sharing this cheerful opinion, encouraged Maude to retain it. He himself had grown grave, and wan-looking. People began to say, at last, Lord Roland was yielding up his youth, and to watch for every new sign of the approach of Time's defacing finger.

Belle Marmaduke, who was always hovering near him with her lynx eyes alert to catch every significant expression of his countenance, had become puzzled. In her unscrupulous way, she had managed to learn many little events which no one else suspected, but the more she discovered, the more difficult grew the problem.

She ferreted out Neil Northwood's address, and one day startled him by appearing at the threshold of the dim office where he kept his employer's books, with her red lips a-smile, and her black eyes glittering in triumph. Here again, she was terribly taken aback. Her sparkling looks and coquettish graces were uncurrent coin at such a market. Neil, graver, sallower, sterner than ever before,

faced her, and squarely demanded her business. What could Miss Belle reply? Her usual nonchalance failed her for a moment, and she faltered out at the outset what she had meant to retain till the termination of the conversation, and not to betray even then, unless there were excellent reasons for it, that she had come because she suspected he shared her enmity to Lord Roland, and could tell her something about him. She could have bitten out her tongue a moment after, but the mischief was done.

Neil Northwood, who had such chivalrous devotion for one woman that he would readily, any time, have crushed his best hopes to gratify her wishes or save her from pain, had no mercy for the weaknesses of all the rest of her sex, no eye to discover attractions in their loveliest mien, no heart to be touched by their most subtle fascinations. Besides, it was unfortunate for Miss Belle that he detested brunettes.

He turned to her with that darkly sarcastic smile of his, covering the entrance of his den in bear fashion.

"Young woman, this is the counting-room of an honest merchant, occupied by an humble clerk. Its motto is to meddle with no business but in our own line. You must go to your fine drawing-rooms to collect your tit-bits of scandal."

And with this he swung the door in her face, turned the key with a vicious snap, and went back to his desk.

And Miss Belle, amidst the tittering of the clerks outside, walked hurriedly from the shop, concluding that she would leave that particular vein of information unworked for the present.

Poor Neil had more reasons than any one guessed, for being savage. His employer had complained of his frequent absences, and his pre-occupied mind; and his liberal expenditures in the search for Owen had so reduced his means that he could not afford to lose the place. Besides, there was Mrs. Grey with but a mere pittance for her support. To be sure, since the contributions of Owen were no longer received, the desolate woman had insisted upon taking in what work could be obtained in that neighborhood; for nothing could induce her to leave the house where he would come to seek her, if ever he escaped from the impenetrable mystery which now surrounded him. But it smote to Neil's devoted heart like a dagger thrust, every time he saw her bending over her work, and he chafed inward-

ly at his powerlessness to place her safe from all such needs. Behind and beneath all this was a morbid restlessness which pained and alarmed him. A tempting suggestion had come to him, and it would not be thrust aside.

The boy was gone. She was alone now, the last tie which held her to that miserable past snapped rudely asunder. Why might not Time's healing touch cauterize the festering wound, deaden the remembrance? What was there to hinder them from beginning a new life, finding peace and happiness once more? Might she not learn now to care for him? Not like the throbbing warmth of his idolatrous love—he was not wild enough to hope for that—but a calm, grave affection, which should be rich reward for his long, faithful, unswerving devotion? These thoughts haunted him day and night. What might he not become, so his heart should be able to revive from this deadly blast, and be peaceful and content? He felt within him the power to be twice the man he had ever been. His employer was right. It was but cold, half-service he had given; all his keenest interest had been far away, mind, as it were, divorced from the body. Now different it might be!

With such tempting thoughts poor Neil wrestled and wrestled, but every day they waxed stronger. Twice he went out to Mrs. Grey's, determined to speak them bravely, and twice the sight of her grave, pale, abstracted face sent him back hugging the comforting excuse for his silence.

"It is not time yet. I must give her time. It will soon be very different. She cannot mourn always."

But Neil little suspected how thoroughly the lonely woman, living her solitary life there amidst those rude people, went back to her past, and dwelt in it, and fed upon it.

Letitia Grey's was not an ordinary character. There were deep, exhaustless fountains of strength underlying her fragile appearance. There were subtle, mysterious links which bound her to wonderful and invisible elements. Lovely and rarely symmetrical as was the outward semblance, the mind within was still more perfectly rounded, the soul far more rich in grace. Alone, in dependence and poverty, cruelly bereft of her last solace, haunted always by the bitter menace of a terrible grief which could reach her, even from years that had fled forever, this woman was not crushed, nor broken down. The first shock of this last blow had stunned her, but she had risen from

it with that dauntless heroism which may well bear the palm away from the fire of battle rage. She would bear as bravely, she would accept as meekly as possible, what was laid upon her. And so calm, although very grave and still, she lingered in the dreary spot which Owen's glad smile and eager voice had made so bright for her. The pitying neighbors looked in upon her now and then, but they knew, without her hinting it, how little companionship they were able to give her. She had lost her dread of the discovery of her old identity. It was for Owen's sake she had struggled against it. She was pensive now. Neil's visits were less cheering than ever before, since, without fathoming the cause, she detected his restlessness and abstraction, and was relieved from sympathizing uneasiness by his absence.

CHAPTER VIII.

BUT one day there came a visitor who brightened her monotonous existence, as Letitia Grey had believed nothing but Owen's return could ever do. She heard a timid knock at the outer door, and went out to admit, as she supposed, one of the fishermen's wives or some of the children. An involuntary smile came to her lips as she caught sight of the pretty picture through the unclosing door.

There was a young girl, daintily and richly dressed, but with nothing showy or unbecoming in the slightest detail of her costume. A pale blue dress of some soft, thick material, a short, deep blue velvet sacque, and a hat with white plumes, and fluttering knots of azure ribbon. These Mrs. Grey saw afterward, but now her eyes were caught and held by the sweet, fair face with its wide, eager, blue eyes, and its shyly smiling lips, half a-tremble with a wistful grief, and by the waving cloud of curling hair of a golden bronze, just such as matched the tresses Owen had so often snatched from the keeping of her own shrouding lace cap.

"You are Mrs. Grey," said a sweet, clear voice; "may I come in and see you? I came down the river in Mr. Mertoun's boat."

"Certainly. You are chilly, I am sure, if you have come on the water this wintry day. You shall be warm in a moment."

Behind the fairy figure were the square shoulders of Jake, and a rich fur cloak hung carelessly over his arm.

"She axed me so earnestly, I couldn't help bringing her, ma'am. I hope you wont be offended," whispered Jake, as he handed over the cloak.

"Why should I?" answered Mrs. Grey, with a sad smile, still entirely unsuspecting of the identity of her visitor; and taking the costly garment into her own hands, she led her lovely young visitor hastily through the forlorn outer room, into what Owen called his oasis in the desert.

The apartment still wore its cosy, picturesque look. Mrs. Grey, aside from her own refined taste, had found a melancholy pleasure in keeping the same artistic arrangements which had so delighted her boy. There were the pictures, the books, the groups of statuary, and above all, the window filled with flowers. It was in its glory now, that flower-stand. For while winter's chilly breath was freezing all the pleasant breath in the out-of-door gardens, here there seemed additional strength and vigor. The stalks of all the plants were stout and strong, the leaves refreshingly green and profuse, while the blossoms fairly ran riot beneath the welcome warmth. There were fuchsias drooping their sprays of crimson glory, purple-veined and dusky-tongued on one side, and snowy, waxy callas uplifting their fairy cups on the other. Odorous whispers came with every stir of air from *mignonette* and *heliotrope*, nodding their clustering heads into a convolution of pale purple and burnt sienna. A little bush of heath seemed like a pink cloud sailing through silvery skies. An orange tree gave a tropic breath, and opened its milky blossoms amidst the glossy green leaves, and gloried in donning tiny balls of yellowish green, and two red gold globes, already perfected to fruitage. *Verbenas*, and numberless creepers, wove in and out their rainbow hues, and for a framework, an English ivy, carefully transplanted, circled thrice the window-casement. An artist could not have asked a more graceful arrangement or harmonious blending of colors.

Mrs. Grey's visitor glanced at it lovingly, and then turned away.

"Mrs. Grey," said she, "I have been longing so much to see you, but I was almost afraid to come. And now I have stolen away without their suspecting where I am gone."

She settled herself into the proffered rocking-chair, while she spoke, but never moved her eyes from Mrs. Grey's face.

"It was I, you know, who saw Owen that night. I have been afraid you would dread to

see me, because—because if he had not come there, it might never have happened."

Her hostess's hand, which had been removing her hat and unbuttoning the sacque, dropped away suddenly.

"You are Lady Maude Inglis?" faltered her whitening lips.

"I am. He saved my life; O let me help you mourn for his absence. Let me love you a little!" cried Maude, starting from her seat, and half extending her arms, while the warm tears filled the blue eyes, and overflowed the golden lashes.

Letitia Grey looked a moment into the sweet, sympathizing face, and then took the girl to her heart.

"My child, my sweet child! Do you know how he dreamed about you?"

"I do. He told me about it, and I have come to tell you every word we said. No one else has heard it, no one else ever shall. O, it is so sweet that you are not angry with me, that you will let me love you."

And this young creature, from whose pathway the thorns and cares had been so zealously removed, and the pale, grave woman, who had borne the world's heaviest burdens so meekly, fell into each other's arms, smiling, weeping, kissing each other fondly.

It was some time before either could talk calmly or coherently, but Maude, by little ejaculations, and broken sentences, and eloquent gestures, had given a comprehensive account of her moonlight meeting with Owen.

"You know what I promised. I scarcely knew what it meant then, but it has grown upon me till it is a solemn responsibility. He is not dead, he cannot be dead; I feel it here," and she laid her white hand against her fluttering heart. "But where is he? what shall we do to find him? O, that is what haunts me day and night!"

Letitia Grey kissed her again with almost reverential tenderness.

"My child," said she, "Heaven has sent you. Our paths indeed touch—I will shun that truth no longer. And we two, we whom he loved best,—why not who both love him best?—out of all the rest insist that he is still alive. It is the intuition of wrapt, unselfish love. Be comforted, darling, as I am comforted. Somehow, somewhere we shall find him. He will come back to us. I feel it, I know it."

Lady Maude looked up into the shining, inspired face.

"Ah," said she, "he told me how beautiful you were. No wonder he could dream of no

other ideal. As if it were possible for my poor, silly face to be like yours, though I grow ever so good and wise!"

"Sweet child! one could not wish it more lovely. And my boy saved it from the shrouding waters! My gallant, gallant boy! This is all so strange!"

"Like a dream, I am sure!" answered Maude, nestling closer into the encircling arms. "You do not think me a foolish child? I was so afraid you would not understand it. But I explain it just as Owen did. I had my ideal; my kind, noble guardian was all I could ask for a hero, except that he is so far beyond me in years. And then came Owen. Somehow, that night he had the very looks and gestures, he seemed the very personation of Lord Roland returned to his youth. How could I help giving the promise, knowing that if he only realized his hopes, he would be just the ideal I had set up? I know if Owen does not come, I shall never see another who will be so grand and noble to me as Lord Roland."

"Lord Roland! I had forgotten him!" exclaimed Letitia Grey, in a low, tremulous voice, but she turned away her face that the girl might not see its white look of consternation.

"He is my guardian. I had some vague, foolish thoughts once, that I might sometime, possibly, out of weariness of all others, turn to him. The years between did not seem so wide a division as now. I told Owen if he did not come I should marry Lord Roland. But I did not know myself then. This strange absence, these wild conjectures about his fate, have riveted my thoughts upon Owen. And he is so much like Lord Roland. You would say so if you could see Lord Roland. Owen is his very image. O Mrs. Grey, we must find Owen!"

Letitia Gray put her hand to her forehead.

"Yes," said she, "we must find Owen."

"And you—you must not remain here. You will come to Inglis Park and be my dear friend, my very mother. But it is as hard to think you are old enough for that, as to believe that Lord Roland was my father's senior."

Lord Roland, Lord Roland! Why must that name break in so often upon her innocent prattle? Letitia Grey turned her pale face towards the window, and sighed drearily.

"You are tired. And I am leaning my heavy weight against you," said Maude, anxiously. "Sit down in the chair beside me. But give me your hand, it is so sweet to be

sure that I am here, and that you do not repel me. O, I longed so much to come before, but I never dared. And I could ask no one, for I would not tell my aunt nor my guardian, either of them, about my promise to Owen, or what he said to me. They would call me wild. But to-day I saw this man near the bank, and I knew him in a moment. I waved my handkerchief, and sent Lucille into the house, while he was coming to me, for a cloak. And he said he could take me where you were, and before I had time to think, was I rash or not, I was on the way."

"Heaven sent you to be a comfort to me," returned Mrs. Grey, kissing the wistful lips. "And I hope you will come again, that is, if your friends will allow it. You must tell them about it, and obey their wishes. I see not how they can object."

"But I want to carry you back. This is no place for you. Jake, the fisherman, said they had always wondered why you stayed among them; one could see you were a lady born."

The time had gone by when Letitia Grey could be affrighted at this, and she only sighed.

"I cannot go with you, dear child. I must remain here where my boy would come to find me. But you may come frequently, if your noble friends do not disapprove your visits to so poor a place."

"No one shall hinder me. Lord Roland shall come and see you, and then he will understand why I love you so much already."

No sign of gasping terror at her heart was allowed to the calm, even tones, as Letitia Grey replied:

"My child, you must promise to come alone. It would distress me greatly to see any gentlemen visitors. Remember my long seclusion, my lonely position. You must never bring your guardian here, Lady Maude."

"I wanted you to see him. I thought it would please you to detect this likeness to your son. But, of course, I shall obey you. He does not come so often to Inglis Park now. I think he has some trouble of his own; there is a change in him since that day he received the telegram, the very day he just the same as asked me to marry him, if I could not find anybody that suited me better."

"Lady Maude, you must not marry him."

"No fear," laughed Maude, "he took it back that very next day. Belle throws out dark hints of a wife to be rid of first. But I don't believe her. Lord Roland is the soul of honor. No one shall make me doubt him."

"I shall not try," said Letitia Grey, softly.

They talked on of many things, and yet all subjects revolving around one central pivot—the mysteriously lost, who must somehow be quickly found. Little Maude revealed more of her innocent heart, her sensitive, impressible temperament, to that other blue eye in the brief hour of their interview, than Lady Margaret had learned in the seventeen years of the young girl's life. They parted like tender relatives.

"And now I must go. I must really go, or they will be frightened at the Park. It is a long row, too, for poor Jake. I cannot bear to leave you," said Maude, with both arms around the neck of her new-found friend.

"And I am strangely loathe to give you up," faltered Mrs. Grey.

"If you would come with me to the Park?" coaxed Maude.

"Nay, nay, it is impossible."

"Then I shall come soon. It will be easier to have the carriage bring me, and swifter."

"I will accompany you to the boat. Jake must be very careful with so precious a passenger."

Hand in hand the pair descended to the little wharf. Jake was waiting there, and, mindful of the shining gold piece already given, was eager for the return trip. Letitia Grey stood gravely watching the dancing boat till it turned the bend of the river, and the snowy plumes and fluttering golden curls were lost to her view; and walked back "with the brightest face," Mrs. Mertoun said to her neighbor, "that she had shown since that terrible misfortin o' hern."

The prancing of spirited horses before her door, the next afternoon, startled Mrs. Grey into rushing out in vague terror, and then wilder hope. But no: it was no Owen, returning to her in triumph. Lady Maude's bright face was looking from the window of the elegant carriage.

"Dear Mrs. Grey, I couldn't wait any longer. You are to take a little ride with me, and while Dixon is resting the horses at the inn, we will have a nice walk in this pretty country lying back of you. I am sure you will not refuse, when I tell you I have my guardian's express permission. And it is not cold at all for the season."

Mrs. Grey turned back at once, and reappeared in her brown dress, neat and tasteful, but of simple material, with plain hat and thick shawl. A heavy brown veil was flung back from her face.

Dixon was too well used to his young mistress's whims to be astonished at the forlorn spot to which she had come for a companion in her long drive. And so, regardless of the group of shouting children gathered together in clamorous delight at the unusual sight, he opened the door of the carriage, and assisted her to Lady Maude's side. Neither was he shocked when the latter kissed the stranger eagerly; for he had heard the melancholy story of the young fisherman who had saved Lady Maude's life. But when he saw the lady's face, he started, rubbed his eyes, and climbing slowly to his seat behind the coachman, muttered:

"That's a face I've seen before! and not in a place like this poor den, either."

Maude, within the carriage, was carefully folding her own fur cloak around her guest's shoulders.

"I hope you do not feel the cold. The carriage is close, and I think it is a delightful day; such another as we may hardly hope for until spring is here again. You look so very pale, dear Mrs. Grey!"

"It is something new, my child, for me to be riding in a carriage, and in such dear company. I may well be a little startled from my composure."

"But you like it, I hope? You'll enjoy it."

"How can I help it? And your friends were willing you should come to me; I am very thankful for that."

"I asked no one but my guardian, and he had not a word of objection, but rather approved. I expected to be catechised concerning your appearance; but he questioned never a word, only said if you were the lad's mother, you were probably some cousin of a gentleman he once knew, and that there was no fear of my choosing improper or injudicious companions. So I shall come to you just as often as this blustering old winter will allow. But I cannot help wishing you would make your home with me, at the Park. Lady Margaret is very glad I have decided to forego the London season. But how could I go into gay and festive scenes under this suspense, remembering him? I have been asking Lord Roland about further investigations. He thinks they are hopeless, but has promised to urge the police to keep the case in mind."

"My own friend is doing the same. We weak women can only pray; but that may prove the strongest means for his release. Human skill and wisdom fail. Heaven alone is powerful."

"Let us never weary, then, of our part. See, here is the inn. What if we walk a little way towards the village, while they are attending to the horses? I like to walk when the ground is so crisp and hard, and echoes back your tread."

The ladies descended, and sauntered slowly along the highway, Dixon keeping behind them at a respectful distance. They were detained by a closed gate across the street, which was crossed by a railroad, and waited as the iron monster came shrieking on. The train was one which stopped at way stations, and made a pause, though there were but few passengers to alight. The attention of Maude was attracted by a short, stunted figure, clad in wretched rags, which leaped nimbly from one of the second-class carriages. It was a child of twelve or fourteen, evidently, but with dwarfed limbs and a thin, sharp face, with a painfully precocious look in the great staring eyes. Eyes, it was evident, which had looked upon a great deal of misery, and possibly of sin and crime.

The girl stood quite still, even after the train had moved away, staring about her with a puzzled, wondering look. A forlorn, wretched looking creature, indeed! The scanty blue woollen skirt was torn and drabbed, and worn threadbare in places; the little square shawl, faded to a dingy shade which hardly gave hint of the original color, was huddled rather than folded over her shoulders. Her hands and arms were bare, and blue in ugly spots which hinted of something beyond the chill of the air. Through the wide gaps of thin, cheap shoes peeped the purple, dingy feet, guiltless of stockings, and evidently quite as unfamiliar with water.

She stood motionless, lost in wonder, probably, at the breadth of space around her; for she had never before left the reeking, crowded, narrow streets of St Giles. Wretched, forlorn little waif of humanity that she was, reared from her birth in one of the foulest dens of iniquity that the great Babel of London could present. Wild uproar, shrill vituperation, clashing weapons and sounding blows, curses, shrieks, midnight brawls, all these she understood and accepted as a matter of course. But the sudden silence left behind when the train shot away, this wide breadth of land and far reach of sky, clear, calm, peaceful, struck down upon this dumb, sin-cramped nature, and startled it beyond the power of any alarm or threatening danger. She looked awe-struck, amazed, like one

dropped suddenly into a new sphere, and glanced bewilderedly up and down.

The crisp remnants of blackened flower and vine on the banks of the road, the evergreen hedges in the distance, were evidently matters of keen interest, for she looked at them long and intently. But presently she put both hands over her eyes, those bright, knowing, eerie eyes, and muttered:

"You mustn't look any more, Bet; you'll be all in a muddle, and then what'll become of ye, and the poor lad beside? 'Walk straight up, with your back to the track, not go down the hill.' That's all straight, anyhow. 'Keep to the right-hand road all the way till you see the river, then turn down the second lane you pass.' That's right, too. You're a trump, Bet. Now you'd better start, afore this great sky swallows you."

She shook her little emaciated body, scrambled away the shaggy, unkempt locks from her eyes, and moved on.

The other passengers had gone down the road on the other side, and only Lady Maude and her companion were near, the latter remaining stationary in obedience to Maude's restraining hand. They had heard every word she uttered, but the child had evidently no interest in animate objects, and gave them no heed.

"Poor little creature!" whispered Maude. "Only look at those feet, this cold day! I must take her into the shop back of the inn, and get her some stockings and shoes."

And so Maude, with a compassionate smile on her face, ran after her, and laid her hand on the child's shoulder.

"The old Harry!" exclaimed the thin, piping voice, as the girl faced about, sharply.

Maude burst into a peal of laughter, at the queer look on her face.

"Did I frighten you? I didn't mean it, little one."

"I should think you did. I thought they'd nabbed me, sure enough. And who might you be, and what do you want?" asked the girl, with that painfully sharp, precocious air of hers.

"I wanted to help you a little. Your feet must be cold. I'll get you a pair of new shoes and some warm stockings."

"Sho! But what do you want me to do for you? You can't chaff me, you know, into thinking it's all for nothing. I'm up to those things, you may bet your life on that!"

"Don't, O don't talk in that way!" said the horrified Maude. "It isn't nice."

"Nice?" Bet echoed the word with a derisive laugh. "And who expects begging Bet to be nice?"

"Sure enough, your poor child! Where are you going?"

Bet put her little begrimed thumb to her nose, and fluttered the fingers saucily.

"Maybe you'll find out, and maybe you won't."

"O Mrs. Grey, come here and see what you can do with this poor little wretch!" exclaimed Maude, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. "It is so shocking to see and hear her!"

Mrs. Grey came forward, with her gentle, motherly smile, and her pitying eyes. Bet had pricked up her ears at the name. Her sharp bright eyes searched over the sweet, serene face, and sparkled triumphantly.

"Be that your name—Miss Grey?" And do you live down by the river, back from this, the second lane from the right-hand road? Poke away that bonnet o' yours a minute, will ye? I aint a goin to make a fool o' myself nor of him. No-sir-ee, you don't catch Bet at that. I want to see yer hair."

Mrs. Grey, trembling with a quick thrill of premonition, threw back her close bonnet, and thrust away the lace cap. Bet nodded her head up and down, and began fumbling at her dress.

"Jest like gold. My eye! aint it purty, though! Now, look a-here; jest you answer one question, and I'll know it's the right tick. Mebbe you've had a boy, sometime—a real beauty, with big brown eyes, and hair a curling all round his forehead."

"Yes, yes!" shrieked Mrs. Grey. "O merciful heavens! is he coming back to me?"

"Not by a great sight. You've got to get at him, somehow. What's his name? that's the question."

"Owen, Owen Grey," gasped Mrs. Grey, almost devouring the important little face peering into hers.

"All right!" ejaculated Bet, evidently greatly relieved. "Now look at this ere, and see what he wants."

She drew forth a dingy piece of folded paper, and put it promptly into Mrs. Grey's hand. It was evidently a piece of wall paper torn from some house, and on it, traced with a coal or blackened stick, were these words:

"Mother, save me! I am a prisoner, and cannot escape. The child can bring help to this house in London. She can point it out. Lose no time.

OWEN GREY."

Lady Maude had read over her shoulder these words, written, evidently, with the rudest of materials, but still legible and plain. The two ladies standing there in the street, seized each other by the hand, weeping, kissing, laughing, and weeping again.

"He is alive! he is alive! O Mrs. Grey, we were always sure of it!" exclaimed Maude, and then turned to the child, who was watching them with astonishment, and it almost seemed with a little contempt for their wildness.

"You brave little creature, you shall never know any further want. Come with us this moment." And here she beckoned to Dixon, who was lounging at the station.

"Go back and get the horses, Dixon. We are going to London at once. Lose not a single minute."

"But, your ladyship, they've just begun their oats."

"No matter; we are not to lose a moment. We will take fresh ones, if they give out. Come, Bet, come with us. We will, at least, make you warmer, and get you food, and on the way you shall tell us this wonderful story."

She had no scruples, now, but grasped the dingy hand closely with her daintily gloved fingers, and ran, rather than walked, towards the one store of the little village. Mrs. Grey followed, like one in a dream.

Gold is a wonderful magician. While the horses were being again secured to the carriage, little Bet had been transformed from a squalid little beggar to a comfortably-dressed child. The shopkeeper had no clothing; but he had a child of Bet's size, and his house was over the shop. Lady Maude gave him an order on her banker, and helped herself liberally to the astonished young country girl's wardrobe. Mrs. Grey, with her own hands, washed the poor purple feet in soft warm water, and scrubbed at the dingy hands and face. The two ladies wept again as the filthy rags were removed, and showed the cruel welts across the lean, narrow back, and the thin arms.

"That's where they licked me, ye know," said Bet, with a chuckle; "but they aint a going to have another chance, be they?"

"No, no," answered tender Maude, shuddering at this revelation of misery.

A warm shawl was folded about her, and the child, hardly recognizable, it would seem, to her oldest acquaintances, was put into the carriage between the ladies.

"You are going with me, Mrs. Grey," says

Maude. "I am taking her at once to the headquarters of the London police. I will send to Kensington for my guardian, afterwards."

"Yes, I am going," answered Mrs. Grey, in the voice of one but half awake.

Maude had been fumbling under the seat, and in a moment she brought out a basket well packed with luncheon.

"I am so thankful I brought it!" she exclaimed to Mrs. Grey. "I did not know but we should take a long ride, and I fancied we should enjoy a sort of picnic, though it were taken inside the carriage, instead of under embowering green." And pulling off her gloves, she picked out a dainty shred of chicken and a biscuit, and thrust them into the lap of the child.

The kindling, gloating eye, the grasping fingers, half frightened the delicately-reared daughter of rank; but she only pressed Mrs. Grey's hand, and caught a little breath of commiseration, and hurriedly brought out further stores. Bet stared at the golden slices of cake, with their snowy line of frosting, which were piled into her lap.

"O my! but he was right. He said if I would do this for him, I'd be never a poor beggar again. I reckon it's the best job Bet ever took up yet. My eye! how Big Nick will swear when he knows that I've done it!" And she went on greedily munching.

The two ladies watched her with breathless attention, and it was a proof of their tender sympathy for her that neither urged the revelation for which they were so feverishly longing, until they were sure that her appetite was appeased.

When at last the girl pushed away the basket, and began stowing the remnants of cake in her pocket, Maude, with a great sigh of relief, bent forward towards her.

"Now, Bet, you know we are your friends, you know that we shall always keep you and care for you. Tell us the whole, and only the truth; not a word but what is truth."

"Where's the need o' my lying?" answered Bet, laconically.

"He is alive now, at this very moment—my Owen? you say that, don't you?" cried Mrs. Grey, glancing through the window beneath the coachman's box to see that the horses were dashing steadily forward, according to Lady Maude's emphatic charge, and sinking back in her seat with quivering lips and suffused eyes, as Maude reached out her little hand to clasp hers warmly.

"What a fool I'd ha' been to come scrimmign' out here, if 'twarnt so!" said Bet, snapping her eyes and shaking her head. "Now I'll tell you jest how I come to know about him."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]



THE DERWENT EYES AND HAIR.

BY AMETHYST WAYNE.

PART V.

CHAPTER IX.

"MEBBE you don't know much about our part o' London," began Bet, turning her sharp eyes upon Mrs. Grey's face; "leastwise, I never seed such as your kind o' folks turning our way. Only the perlice, and now and then a gentleman who's got into trouble and wants help out of it, looks that way. My eye, I expect you'd be scared to death to hear Old Beck roar and swear, and see the sights I've seed all my life."

Poor wretch! she spoke as if she had passed through years beyond theirs, and, for that matter, so she had. Youth had been ruthlessly stripped away from her in that hotbed of dissipation and vice, and every day had a month's horror, and every month a year's suffering and deprivation.

"Well, I live in Old Beck's room, and I begs cold vittles and gets a handful of pennies, 'specially when she's licked me purty bad. See there! that's 'cause she caught me climbing on the roof." And she stripped up her sleeve to show the great welt, swollen and livid.

The two ladies shuddered, then Mrs. Grey asked quietly, knowing that they had a three hours' journey before them, and that it was wisest to leave her to tell the story in her own way, "And who is Old Beck?"

"Why, my mother, who else do ye spouse would be a beating me? Her room is jest under his'n, and that's how I found him out 'Cause ye know every room has a tribe of its own."

"What! a house full of families?" ejaculated innocent Maude.

"La sakes! you don't know much!" says Bet, with a gesture of grave importance. "Leave me alone for the sights I can tell about. Well, ye see I knowed when they first come, Big Nick and Flashy Jim. Mother'd had her bottle, and got stirred up, and she kicked me out the room, and I was a laying on a meal bag down below in the entry. And them two come in, and they had the boy, who looked

just like he was dead, between 'em, only he kept a meaning with his eyes all shut, so I knowed he wasn't dead."

"The boy!—my Owen, do you mean?" cried out Mrs. Grey, breathlessly.

Bet nodded, and went on, evidently enjoying her own importance. "I was curled upon the floor like a kitten, and they never minded me, and you'd better believe I'm sharp enough to hold my tongue and save what kicks and blows I can. I heard Big Nick ask in a whisper if there was anybody round to peach, and Flashy Jim said no, right off. Then between 'em they carried him up, and when things got still agin I went to sleep. But I thought 'twas kinder queer I didn't hear none of 'em say about the sick feller, and I wanted to hear something more about him. And I kept sharp watch, but that door of their'n was locked all the time, and all I could find out was by watching them two come in, and listening when I had a chance. Old Beck turned me off so much, nobody in the place minded when I slept outside their door, and I heard enough inside that room to know there ~~was~~ ^{was} somebody there who wanted to get out and couldn't, and I guessed it was the boy. And I heard them talking about a reward offered, and advertisements in the newspapers. Still nobody in the place suspected a word about his being there. But you see, he was sick then, and couldn't help himself. Pretty soon I heard a great pounding up there. They said, down below that Flashy Jim was getting grand, and was fixing up a closet, but I wasn't fooled, I knew it had something to do with the boy up there who wasn't seen by nobody, and I was burning up with my wanting to get a look at him, and the more I thought on it, the more I was determined to do it somehow, spite of Flashy Jim and Big Nick.

"The top o' the house was made flat, like a shed roof to dry clothes, cause the yard wasn't bigger'n a pigpen. One day, when I was a poking around I found out the slates were loose, lots of 'em. I just went down the lane

and took a look at that winder o' their'n, and I got an old spike and pried up two or three o' the slates. And that wasn't nothing to do, for the whole of 'em were ready to tumble off; but the thing was, to come to the right place. For I had to work with my spike through the old rotten boards and the plastering. But it wasn't much anyhow; they had the attic, you know, and there warn't much work spent on that when the house was new, and it's had hard times since, I reckon. The worst for me, was slipping off out of Old Beck's sight. But whenever she come home with the bottle full, I knowed 'twas my time, and I went to work. I got it all done, and could see right into the room, when I put down my eye to the hole, but the first time there I was looking into an empty room. Jim's closet was built right out into the room, and hung with old blankets. I made my hole further along, and when I looked into the closet there he was. My sakes! how white and thin, and so down-hearted! And them men had tied his hands so he couldn't beat against the closet, and had stuffed it all around, so if he hollered it wouldn't go down to the street. The first time I looked and looked, and then I put down the slate to cover up my hole, and off I run. Somehow he scared me."

Mrs. Grey, with hands clenched together to keep down her anguish, sat with wild eyes watching every look on the girl's face.

Maude, overwhelmed by the picture, covered her face and wept.

"It warn't my fault," said Bet, touched by their distress.

"No, no, you helped him; go on, go on," said Mrs. Grey, hoarsely.

"The next time I went up I whispered to him, and made him know where I was. O my! How he cried for joy, and asked me to help him. He said he was kept there they would not tell him why, and he wanted to get word to his friends. They watched him so close, and were so cruel, he couldn't get away if he was strong, and he was weak and sick. He told me a street and number, and a man's name. It was queer enough the name—Neil Northwood. I said it over twenty times, so as to remember it, and he told me to go there and tell him that Owen was a prisoner, and that I could show him the spot. And I agreed to go, but Old Beck took me the next day off on a tramp, and we were gone down to Greenwich, three weeks or more, a begging and thieving. When I come back I runs up to the roof the minute the men were off, and pulls

up my tile and looks down. There he was wo- fuller than ever, his hands tied, and a hand- kerchief tied all over his mouth. He'd been a screeching for help, and they'd stopped it that way. The closet wasn't more'n big enough to turn around in. I called to him and told him why I hadn't helped him afore. And then we had a long talk, only we had to whisper. I promised to do it the minute I got away alone in the streets. For I knew the place I'd been a begging lots of times along there. But it was ten days, I believe, afore I had the chance, and then when I got there, they turned me out, said I was an imperdent beggar, and told me the man warn't there now.

I thought the poor seller's heart was broken when I told him about it. But I tells him to keep up courage, I'd do the thing somehow. And I found some paper, and burnt a piece of stick, and dropped them down to him. And he said he'd write something for me to take when his arms were untied as they allowed 'em when one of 'em was in the other room. And then we tried to plan lots of ways to get him out. If only it hadn't been for two great beams, I told him I knew I could make a place big enough for him to come on to the roof. He wanted me go to a policeman, but I knew they wouldn't mind me; they'd say I was a little beggar thief, and there was two or three of them had seen me and caught me, and I was afraid to try it without something to show. He got the papers written, and I let down a string to him, and he tied 'em on somehow with two fingers and his teeth. I was to give one to a policeman, and one to some great cove or other, Lord Somebody—and then he told me just how to come out here to you. And he said if I did it, yo'd take care of me always."

"And so we will—so we will," burst forth from Maude. "O, why are these horses so slow?"

"I hid the papers, and didn't tell anybody. Where was the use? There wasn't one there but would rather have helped Big Nick than the poor fellow they had got caged so safely. Besides, they'd have fought like tigers against having the perlice come scouring out the house. It would all have turned out good, but what must I do, except fall down stairs, and put my ankle in a fix that warn't very nice, I can tell ye. I had a pretty time of it myself, I was half starved, and beat, and left alone, and the worst of it was I kept thinking o' him, an' how he were a watching and hoping, and nobody to tell him what was the trouble. I 'spect it

needn't ha' been so long, only Old Beck turned me over twice, and put me back where I was in the beginning, and I never got out of that room for three good months, and then I had to crawl on my hands and knees to get up to the roof. But I told him how it was, and I don't forget yet how he cried, when I told him I believed I oughter died, only that I was to help him out. He told me to let down a string and he'd tie a piece of gold chain to it, and I could sell it and get the money to pay the rail carriage fare out here. And he charged me to wait till I was strong enough to walk the streets afore I tried it. And that warn't till yesterday, ma'am. And yesterday I took the chain and told the pawnbroker I found it, and he gave me ten shillings for it. I was sharp enough to say Beck sent me, so he didn't cheat me so much. And then, when I was coming out the shop, I met Beck, and made her believe I'd been begging and I give her one of the shillings, though it was hard to do it, so had to go back. But this morning bright and early I got off. And as quick as I was out of the lane, I run as fast as my legs would take me, and the very first policeman I met—and he was a great way off from our lane,—they don't come too near any of 'em—I gave him his paper. But while I was telling him, who should come along but Flashy Jim? I 'spect my scared looks told him I was up to mischief, for he came right up and made a grab at me. I never stopped for anything, but slipped under the policeman's arms, and away I went. I dodged in and out, up and down, and got away from them, for they both started after me. I had found out just where the place was to take the train, and I says to myself, 'Put for the train, Bet, and let the lordship go. The quicker you're out of this place the better.' And when I got there the train was all ready to start. They were going to put me off, but I held up my shillings, and in I got. And I kept saying over what he told me, and the name of the place to get out, and I knowed I shouldn't make a mistake. And you see I've done it."

"Heaven bless you, child! How shall we reward you?" faltered Mrs. Grey, through her anguished tears.

"You'll keep me, and you won't let Old Beck have me. She'd pound me to a jelly for doing this."

"Dixon," exclaimed Lady Maude through the window, "do your horses move at all?"

"We have made nine miles the last hour," answered Dixon, a little indignantly.

"Get fresh horses at the first inn. If there had only been another train before night we should have taken it."

Mrs. Grey echoed her sigh. Bet leaned back, took out her cake and began to nibble again. She laid it by, however, in a few minutes, and her head nodded, and her eyes grew heavy.

"Lie down on the seat, Bet, you are tired."

And the two ladies busied themselves over her, fixing the velvet cushions carefully to give her most comfort. And accepting what must have been such unaccustomed and astonishing care with that odd nonchalance of hers, Bet closed her eyes, and dropped soundly asleep.

The two ladies crept nearer to each other, with heads too full for words. Only now and then Maude looked out the window and murmured impatiently:

"He is watching, waiting, and we are so slow in getting to him."

But at length through the dim haze of gathering twilight, loomed up before them the numberless roofs, and spires, and great dome of London. They drove through the busy streets at a brisk trot, which with the rumbling over the pavement woke Bet from her nap. She started up and rubbed her eyes, but took in the situation with that mature intuition of hers.

"Halloo! here we are! You aint going to drive down our lane in this style, are you? Bless your eyes! they'd tear us to pieces in no time without a whole army of perlice in front and behind."

"I am going to the police. But I should like to stop a moment on the way and see if Lord Roland is to be found. Dixon, call at his club-house, and ask if he is there. It might save our sending to Kensington. He would manage everything so much better than we can."

Mrs. Grey leaned forward, and her lips parted for speech. She closed them again, however, and sank back in silence, with down-cast eyes. Presently she took the brown veil and let it fall so as nearly to conceal her face.

Lord Roland was at the club-house when Dixon entered it. He came out at once with a look of extreme astonishment on his face, and approached the carriage door. The great lanterns before the entrance were already lighted, and flung their bright glare over him. Under the brown veil, wistful, sorrowful, and yet passionately eager eyes scanned every linement of his face, and Mrs. Grey's two hands were clasped tightly over the heart which beat almost suffocatingly.

"Maude, my darling child, what has brought you hither?" cried he, in a tender, chiding tone, and he put his hand through the window she had let down for him.

"O Lord Roland, we have found him at last. We have come for your help."

"Found whom? Little one, how your eyes shine, and I really believe your cheeks are tear-stained."

What rich tenderness thrilled the voice! How like hammer-beats each word fell upon the listener's strained ear! For a moment Letitia Grey forgot her boy, and his trials and danger. Only for one moment, however; the next, for Owen's sake, she compelled herself to be calm.

"I forgot myself. Lord Roland, this is Mrs. Grey, our brave Owen's mother; and O, we have heard from him. He is alive. This little girl has brought us word from him."

All this Lady Maude delivered in one breath. Lord Roland glanced within, bowed respectfully, and in a prompt business tone demanded an explanation.

It was given to him. He opened the carriage door at once, eager, determined and resolute. Beneath her veil Mrs. Grey drew a fluttering sigh of relief that such strong hands should take up the case. She no longer proposed to go to Neil. "Let Lord Roland do it all. It is meet and right," murmured she, mentally.

"I will ride with you as far as Belmont's. You will go in there and wait for our return. The child shall accompany me to the chief of police," said he, as he took his seat beside Bet, and opposite Maude.

The latter looked over to Mrs. Grey, wishing the veil removed, yet not venturing to suggest it. That lady signified her consent to the arrangement by bowing her head.

Accordingly, when the carriage drove up at the ladies' entrance of the hotel, Lord Roland assisted the two ladies to alight, ran in to speak a few words to the clerk of the house, and left them in the brilliantly-lighted private parlor which he had ordered for them, promising to return with the first news.

Mrs. Grey sat down in the chair, refusing to remove her bonnet, and still clinging to the veil which annoyed Maude so much, since she had built a great many schemes on the hope of convincing her guardian of the refinement and ladylike manner of the fisher-boy's mother.

"Let me remain as I am. Who knows how soon he will come—my boy, my Owen?"

Maude took her hand, and kissed it.

When the tray of refreshments was brought in to them, this sweet, high-born maiden busied herself in serving her friend, pouring out the tea, pressing upon her the sandwich and jelly, and coaxing with that silvery persuasive voice, and tender pleading eye, as she saw how little inclination there was for food of any kind. Maude herself grew anxious and nervous as the hours passed on. She had been inclined to talk and endeavor to whittle away the suspense, and the dreariness of waiting. But there was a look on Mrs. Grey's white face, in her set, dilated eye, which made common talk seem irrelevant. So presently Maude drew a footstool to the easy-chair in which her friend was seated, and, nestling her hand into the cold fingers, and drooping her head to the arm of the chair, fell into silence.

In the street without, there was the ceaseless rumble of passing vehicles and shuffling feet. In the very house continued tramping and murmur of voices, but there in that great parlor it almost seemed as if the hush of the tomb had come. They heard the regular beat of the little ornolu clock on the mantel, its tiny stroke, unheard under ordinary circumstances, but now magnified to the sound of a dropping hammer on a sounding anvil; and when the silvery chime tolled forth the hour, Maude started as if a pistol had been fired in the room.

Mrs. Grey clenched more desperate hold of the little hand, and drew the fair head a little closer, but neither spoke.

So passed another hour, and another. They were growing vaguely alarmed, as well as intensely weary, before there came the quick step echoing along the passage for which they waited. Maude did not recognize it so soon as her companion, for Mrs. Grey instantaneously roused from her strong apathy and dropped her veil over her face. Lord Roland followed his knock immediately. Maude hurried to meet him. His face was full of disappointment and annoyance.

"You have not found him?" exclaimed she.

Mrs. Grey only clenched her cold hands and listened.

"No, we have not found him," responded Lord Roland, in a voice full of regret. "We are all puzzled. It hardly seems likely that child could so successfully impose upon us all, reared in crime though she has been. But the house she led us to and the room had no closet, and no prisoner. Moreover, there were no such men there as she described.

"O no, she did not impose upon us. I know she was honest and true," exclaimed Maude, indignantly.

"I am inclined to think so myself, although the police recognizes her as a juvenile pick-pocket. They say she has obtained nice clothing, been petted and feasted, and probably expected to obtain a premature reward of money, and argue that she concocted the story or received it from some one who had read the advertisement, solely to obtain this."

"Is it possible such depravity can exist?" exclaimed Maude. "Dear Mrs. Grey, what do you believe?"

Mrs. Grey's voice was scarcely audible, husky as it was. "I believe that my son is alive, that he sent her to me. My name and residence were never mentioned in the advertisement, and the child had them accurately. O my boy, my boy!"

"My dear madam, be assured the affair shall be thoroughly investigated," said Lord Roland, looking toward her with pitying interest. "You are right, that is another proof of the child's honesty. We have retained her. She is with one of the officers in comfortable quarters, to identify the policeman who received the first scrap of paper, according to her story. There was a look of eager rejoicing on her face when she led me up to that wretched attic which made me trust her, and the horror which came upon her at the discovery of its tenantless condition, could scarcely, to my mind, have been counterfeited. It seems likely that this fellow who discovered her attempt to relieve the prisoner, by giving his note to the policeman, took instant alarm and removed all traces of his presence, though why every soul in the building should deny all knowledge of such movement is a mystery. I dare say to-morrow will unravel much of it.

[CONCLUDED IN NEXT NUMBER.]

Lady Maude, will you go with your friend to Mabury House, or remain the rest of the night at this hotel? Dixon and I will both attend your movements."

Mrs. Grey rose slowly from her chair.

"For myself," said she, "I have a friend in London to whom I had better go. I can take a hack."

"But not at this hour of the night," said Maude, beseechingly. "Let us remain here, then, both of us. You will not refuse to stay with me, I am sure. It will be better, so much better for both of us, to be together to-night."

"I agree with you, dear Maude," said Lord Roland. "And you must be greatly fatigued with your long rides and all this excitement. I telegraphed down to Lady Margaret that you were here. Such a precipitate flight might well alarm them."

"You are always so kind and thoughtful. O Lord Roland, go back to the police office early in the morning, and tell them to persevere. That poor youth is still in the power of those unprincipled men."

"But what motive could there be? that is what perplexes the police. If there was hope of extorting money it might account for it. Can you form the slightest conjecture, Mrs. Grey?" said Lord Roland, turning to Mrs. Grey.

She shook her head despondently.

"We will talk no more about it to-night.

You need rest sadly. I will send one of the chamber-maids to attend you. Good-night, madam. Good-night, my little Maude."

And Lord Roland went away, murmuring in a perplexed tone, "If I could only imagine a motive."

It was not long before an explanation came to him. Even then it was on its way.



THE DOWNFALL OF FAITH IN CEDARVILLE.

BY MRS. R. B. EDSON.

SOMETHING over a year ago, I gave a veracious account in the "Flag of our Union," of the overwhelming disappointment and indignation which convulsed Cedarville when the "brilliant meteoric display" was *not* displayed. It was a terrible blow to the faith of Cedarville, and for something more than a year she refused to be comforted. But time, which accomplishes all things, at length restored her confidence, and set her on her feet again, metaphorically speaking.

Perhaps you think Cedarville some quiet, unconsequential village in some obscure town, and fancy her exaltation or depression a matter of small moment. Let me hasten to

undeceive you. Cedarville is, according to the belief of its enterprising and intelligent citizens—and of course they are the best authority—the great centre of wisdom, enterprise, intelligence and ability. For *its* growth and benefit all other places were made. If at any time, by any wonderful convulsion of nature, Cedarville should drop out of existence, the mighty wheels of progress would be hopelessly stopped, and the benighted world would ultimately resolve itself back to chaos. To keep this fact prominently before the people, as well as to enlighten the surrounding towns who sat in darkness, the "Cedarville Bugle" was originated; so that

the unfortunate people who do not live in Cedarville may read of its glory and be

Now that you understand the extreme importance of the place, I think you will be prepared to be properly shocked and indignant at the story I am about to unfold.

One week late in December, the readers of the "Bugle" were electrified by reading the following announcement in the special column of that valuable sheet:

"Mr. Charles Dickens will give one of his select readings at Cedarville Town Hall, on Thursday evening, the twenty-sixth ult. Tickets two dollars and upward. For sale at the Bugle Office.

"Per order of the committee."

Particular attention was called to this notice in the editorial columns, by which a good many people who had never heard of Dickens before learned that he was "An English novelist, who had visited this country several years ago, and, being peculiarly unfortunate in his points of observation—and not seeing Cedarville—had written a book on his return, some portions of which were not particularly pleasant to take, especially for those who sat for the picture. But, having heard how intelligent and refined we had grown, and what a really clever people we had got to be, he had decided to look at us again."

Now, as it was highly desirable that he should carry back as favorable an opinion as possible of the intelligence and greatness of the country, it had been deemed advisable that he be invited to come to Cedarville. A few of the most prominent citizens had held a meeting, and voted to that effect. They had voted also to extend the hospitalities of the town to this Dickens, which were to consist of a complimentary breakfast at the Cedarville tavern, a visit to her public school, and a serenade in the evening, after the reading, from the "Cedarville Bugles."

As far as Cedarville was concerned, the past was forgotten. She had resolved, too, to be magnanimous—she could afford it. If he or his countrymen had had any fears about the cordiality of his reception, they would all be dissipated after the twenty-sixth of December.

It is impossible to portray the excitement that this caused. Everybody was on the *qui vive*. The "Bugle" office was besieged from morning till night, and as high as two cords of wood, and five bushels of potatoes—

I mean of course their cash value—were paid for a single ticket. Young men pawned their watches and overcoats, and the women sacrificed their feelings and new winter bonnets, to procure tickets. The proprietor of the hotel had the bed linen in his best chamber washed, and prepared a speech of welcome, and half a dozen chickens, all extra.

Sarah Maria Muggins the schoolma'am drilled her astonished pupils from morning till night on deportment, with an enthusiasm that would have delighted Mr. Turveydrop.

The "Bugles" met at their headquarters, and took up a collection to buy five pounds of chalk and a gallon of whiskey, to brighten up themselves and their instruments.

There was very little done in Cedarville that week, or thought of, or talked of, that had not some reference to the one great event by which Cedarville was to display her greatness, and magnanimity, and intelligence.

The temperance wing hoped he was in favor of prohibition, the radical that he was sound on the suffrage question, and the women that he was good-looking; while the "Bugles" hoped he was a "good fellow," if any one knows what that means, and debated the propriety of asking him to "take" something with them—a walk probably.

Justin Allen, whom they all knew to be an ardent admirer of Mr. Dickens, was selected to wait on him in Boston, and inform him that Cedarville awaited him with open arms. He had done so, and reported that the great author was so overcome by their consideration and magnanimity, that he shed tears.

"Cedarville shall have honorable mention in my American Notes (second series)," he had said, as soon as his emotion permitted him to speak.

Whereupon all who had hung back, because "they never heard of Dickens, and didn't know what kind of a man he was," came promptly up to the work, and paid their money cheerfully; thus, as they confidently expected, securing the immortality of Cedarville. Alas, that brightest hopes will perish!

Justin Allen said that Mr. Dickens had particularly requested that "the people shouldn't put themselves out at all for him," and so he had not told him of the proposed breakfast, for fear his sense of obligation would weigh too heavy on him. He was to go into the city the night before, and accompany him out on the half-past seven train. The committee were to meet them at the depot, and march by twos to the hotel, where

breakfast was to be served immediately.

The eventful morning arrived, and, to the great disgust of Cedarville, it rained, as it most always does, if one particularly wishes it not to. Of course carriages had to be procured, which detracted somewhat from the enjoyment of the committee, who had fancied a hundred times, to themselves, the fine appearance they should make, and the envious eyes that would watch them as they filed past. The committee was "very select," and naturally liked common people should see the advantages of their position, and be duly admonished. But the elements have no more consideration for committees than for other people, and when the train came puffing and panting up to the Cedarville station, it rained in torrents, and the committee were glad to retreat into the depot and wait their illustrious guest's exit.

Almost instantly the cars stopped, Justin Allen and a tall, dark-bearded man sprang from the platform of the cars, and were met at the door by the chairman of the committee, a portly, full-faced man, with an enormous breadth of stomach and profusion of watch-seals, and welcomed "to our thriving little town on behalf of its appreciative people."

Mr. Dickens was duly introduced to each individual member; each, to the other's surprise, seeming to have some clever little speech ready to let off, like so many surreptitious torpedoes, at the "illustrious guest," who was so much overcome with the honor done him, that he had to retire a moment to the window, and bury his emotion in silence and his pocket-handkerchief. The committee were delighted with his modesty and evident appreciation of the honor done him in inviting him to Cedarville, and resolved to exert themselves to the utmost to make themselves ridiculous—I mean entertaining.

The party at once adjourned, as per programme, to the hotel, where he had to run the gauntlet of another volley of speeches from a sub-committee, who were in waiting on the steps. He had evidently got a little more accustomed to the thing, for he bore these with less embarrassment, and replied in a very modest manner, however, to them.

The breakfast was duly discussed, and the usual number of toasts and sentiments responded to in the most approved style, all of which referred in some way to "our honored guest," or "our country—its institutions," or "our native town—its thrift and enterprise," and so-forth, and so-forth, which, not being

particularly original, I will not stop to mention.

The after part of the day was devoted to visiting the various points of interest in and about Cedarville, prominent among which was her public school. Mr. Dickens was lavish in his admiration of the whole, but particularly the school, looking at Miss Muggins—who, by the way, was one of the prettiest and most sensible girls in Cedarville—so persistently when he expressed his admiration, that she, poor little thing, blushed scarlet, and then came near bursting into tears from shame and embarrassment that she did so.

At an early hour the Town Hall was filled by the entire population of Cedarville, except a very few who were either too pious or too bilious to listen to the reading of "novels." The selections were both pleasing and interesting, and the reading was pronounced "splendid." Everybody was delighted with Mr. Dickens; the ladies especially, he was so much younger and handsomer than they had expected.

He was really a *very* fine-looking man, not looking a day over thirty-five, though the more thoughtful among them considered that he *must* be more than that. The greater number, however, were very willing to take him as he was, without needless speculation. All, however, had some remarks to make, except the little schoolma'am, who was too vexed and mortified with herself, because she had blushed again when Mr. Dickens had spoken to her in the hall, to talk of anything, especially of *him*. She would not have been so silly, she said to herself, if Justin Allen had not whispered in her ear, just before he spoke to her, that "Mr. Dickens admired Yankee schoolma'ams above all the rest of our republican institutions."

That night Cedarville went to its virtuous couch more perfectly satisfied with itself and all the rest of the world, than ever before. I doubt if there was much sleep that night—people were wrought up to too high a pitch of ecstasy. Cedarville had done her duty as became her. The last twenty-four hours of her existence was to make her name immortal, and add new lustre to her already enviable fame. The editor of the "Bugle" had "taken notes," and lay awake till daylight arranging an eloquent report of the day, the place, the orator, wherewith to overwhelm and astonish the surrounding regions, some of whom exhibited such deplorable signs of depravity as not to believe in Cedarville!

There was one place in particular that he had in his mind—a slow, old-fashioned town, that had dared to caricature them unmercifully in its miserable little one-horse sheet the “*Transcript*.” Its editor, C. D. Parker, had once written a long, labored article to prove that the millennium would *not* begin at Cedarville. After that it would not have been safe for him to have ventured upon her consecrated soil. His possible fate is too horrible to contemplate, and I forbear. Enough to say that the editor of the “*Tarrytown Transcript*” had wisely kept away from Cedarville, and no one in that delectable town had ever been obliged to look upon the face of such an unblushing calumniator. Is it any wonder, under the circumstances, that the *Bugle* man felt a peculiar thrill of exultation as he sat down next morning, in his editorial arm-chair, to write an account of the “happy occasion?” Or that he indulged in some pleasant little sarcasms, such as “hoping to chronicle Mr. Dickens’s visit to Tarrytown in our next,” adding that he “could not possibly think of returning to England without visiting that remarkable town,” etc.

But alas for the transitoriness of human bliss! The next night Cedarville sat in sackcloth and ashes, and the voice of lamentation and swearing was heard in her streets. Listen, O reader, while I “a tale unfold, whose lightest word,” etc.

Friday afternoon, after the “*Cedarville Bugle*” had gone to press, its editor walked leisurely home, feeling thoroughly happy all the way through. As he was passing the liberty-pole, he saw a printed placard with the word “*Hoax*” in overgrown capitals at its head. Judge, if you can, of his horror and indignation, when the following met his eye:

“**STUPENDOUS HOAX.**—The man who accepted the hospitality of Cedarville, who ate her complimentary breakfast, and visited her public school, and *took her money*, it is now nearly certain—in fact, quite so—was *not* Mr. Charles Dickens the novelist, but Charles Dickens Parker, editor of the ‘*Tarrytown Transcript*.’”

To say that he turned blue, and purple, and white, that he tore his hair and rushed frantically through the streets, would give but a mild idea of its effect. The news spread rapidly, and in less than an hour the liberty-pole was the great centre of attraction, being surrounded thirty or forty deep with angry,

gesticulating Cedarvillers. And, I think, despite the intelligence and humanity of the nineteenth century, that, if they could have had Mr. Charles Dickens Parker at that moment, it would have been peculiarly gratifying to their feelings to have tied him to said pole, *a la* John Rogers!

If it had been anybody else but him! And the poor editor thought, with unspeakable anguish, of his two-column article descriptive of the occasion, at this moment being printed, and gnashed his teeth in impotent fury.

That evening a gentleman from Boston came out to Cedarville to see an old grandmother who lived there, and he confirmed the truth of the placard, in so far that it was *not* the Dickens. He had heard that gentleman twice, and had seen him many times, and he was altogether a different sort of a looking man; besides, he knew where Mr. Dickens was on that evening, and it was *not* in Cedarville!

Do you wonder that there was sorrow in Cedarville, and that her people waxed wroth? Do you wonder that, considering her past and present experience, her intelligent citizens have resolved henceforth to eschew astronomy and literature, as being deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked?

When Justin Allen returned Saturday night from Boston, it was *not* to meet the congratulations of his fellow-citizens for the part he had played in the affair; for those who knew him best said it was “just one of Jut Allen’s tricks.” But he seemed so astonished and hurt at their accusations, and withal so unwilling to believe that it was not the real, simon-pure author, as he assured them, with tears in his eyes, he had supposed it to be, that their suspicions vanished, and they took him by the hand and asked his forgiveness, which he graciously accorded, though he said “it cut him to the heart that they should doubt him;” whereupon they all declared that they never did, could, would or should doubt him, under any provocation whatever—no, never! There was only one person in Cedarville that was the least bit skeptical in the matter, and that was Sarah Maria Muggins; but, owing to the peculiar nature of her reasons for distrust, she kept very quiet about it, and nobody in Cedarville ever knew that Jut brought a note and a photograph to the pretty schoolma’am, who blushed deeper than ever when she read the note, and muttered “impertinent!” but who, nevertheless, put on her wine-colored thibet

and her sweetest expression, and went up to the photographer's, and was duly taken. What became of the pictures, *I* don't pretend to know; but I have a strong impression that the editor of the "Tarrytown Transcript" could account for *one* of them, if he chose. And as Jut has since brought and carried several notes between Cedarville and Tarrytown, there is chance for a faint hope that

good shall at last come out of evil—that is, so far as the little Muggins is concerned.

Up to this present writing, the editor of the "Bugle" has never once looked in the columns of the "Transcript," but has made a weekly *anto-da-fe* of that unlucky sheet, as a sort of burnt-offering to the wounded dignity of Cedarville.

THE DUVAL DIAMONDS.

BY MISS AMANDA M. HALE.

IN a little studio, high up in a lofty building, where a window in the roof showed a square of April sky tremulous and blue as turquoise, sometimes overcast by a veil of tender, pale clouds which presently rolled themselves into fleecy drifts that went sailing away into the blue, where beautiful purple, soft-eyed doves, tiptoeing about the eaves, came occasionally to peep down through the dusty glass into the close, narrow room below, and drop a note or two of gentle pity, where visions of green trees, and singing brooks, and the joyful freedom of the open country, came only to tantalize and annoy, Basil Deane was hard at work upon a picture. A tall, thin, dreamy-eyed fellow, who saw clearly only the beautiful, but had not the power satisfactorily to embody it, who went about in this hard, terribly-real world in a misty, groping sort of way, taking hold of things by their sharp edges, and dolefully mismanaging everything he undertook, and so failing pitifully, getting always poorer while his friends grew rich, and missing almost all the good of life. It was the Fornarina which he was painting, and he worked away with a careful, painstaking anxiety, elaborating every fold of the drapery, and finishing all the details with Dutch accuracy, but making a wretched copy notwithstanding.

Louis Duval looked on with a quiet, half-scornful smile. He always looked on while other people worked. It was his part in life, and he performed it admirably. It is fair to add, that Basil Deane's creditors came to Duval as a matter of course, and Duval settled the bills, which did not worry Basil because he had forgotten all about them.

At last Basil stepped back, drew a long sigh, and said wearily:

"It isn't what I meant it should be!"

Louis Duval tossed away his cigar and sat upright.

"No! You meant to reproduce Raphael's rather coarse but splendid beauty, and you have made a clumsy washerwoman."

Basil's misty blue eyes grew sad and wistful.

"You don't think it will be liked then?" he said.

"Liked? No! It will be hung in some dark corner of the room, and people will look

at it, and shrug their shoulders, and go away saying that it is another instance of the eccentricity of that gifted artist, Basil Deane, who, everybody knows, might do great things if he would."

Basil flushed up redly.

"Everybody's taste may not agree with yours," he said, rather angrily.

"Try it and see!" And with that Louis sauntered away.

Left alone, Deane touched and retouched the picture, owing to himself more and more every minute, that his friend's criticism was just. That night he sent it up to the hall where the artists were about opening their spring exhibition.

A week afterward Louis Duval climbed the stairs that led to the studio, and presented himself without ceremony in the room. Deane sat reading. His curling blonde hair fell in loose disarray over his temples. His face was haggard and old, his eyes eager and sharp. Duval came up and looked over his shoulder.

"Remarkable suicides!" Pleasant reading that to a man with nerves," he said, coolly, but with a keen glance at Deane.

Deane shut up the book and laughed faintly.

"I suppose there would be nothing remarkable in a disappointed man's terminating his own existence, unless, indeed, one could discover an original method of doing it," he said.

"I suppose not," returned Duval, quietly. "Fools and cowards have taken that road to immortality ever since the world was made. By the way, have you disposed of the Fornarina?" Basil Deane's face darkened. "Because," Duval hastened to say, "I have taken a fancy to buy it as a companion picture to the Bella Donna."

"You can't have it!" said Deane, hastily rising and going to a closet.

"Why not? come now, old fellow, don't be surly. You can't want it when you have that exquisite copy that Claude made for you in Italy,—a copy so good that ninety-nine connoisseurs out of a hundred would take it for a genuine Raphael."

"And so good as to make my own wretched imitation of it the more contemptible. You

can't have it, Duval. Don't you think I understand you?" And Basil's face lighted all over.

Duval affected to be puzzled.

"Is it possible," said he, slowly, "that I am suspected of an intention to benefit anybody? I assure you that my design is utterly selfish."

Basil Deane came out from the closet, his fine, sensitive face glowing with pride and pleasure.

"Don't tell me," he said, hastily, his voice faltering a little. "I know you. But see! Here is a companion for your 'Bella Donna.' If you like it you may buy this!" And he drew away a cloth from before a small canvas.

Duval drew a long breath of delight.

Only a poor beggar girl, her small feet showing through the tattered shoes she wore, her shoulders narrowed and stooping under the weight of a heavy basket, but having a face holy and pure enough for an angel. There was an inexpressible pathos in the shy, upward look of the tender, brown eyes, in the attitude, in the tight clasp of the tiny hands upon the burden, in all the accessories that helped to tell the pitiful story. Duval gazed a minute or two in silence.

"Did you do it?" he asked, presently, in a reverent, tender tone.

"I did it. The child went by my window so often that her face grew into my heart, and would not let me rest till I had painted it."

"But why in Heaven's name have you done such daubs as that—" pointing to the Fornarina—"if you had such things as these in your brain?"

"It wasn't in my brain. I did it from life."

"So much the better. Now, Basil, this you shall do. With what I give you for this picture you shall go out into the country, you shall travel with your pilgrim staff and knapsack, and you shall paint country girls with Madonna faces who croon hymns at their work, and by-and-by fall in love with one of them and immortalize her and yourself."

The fire of enthusiasm leaped to Basil's eyes.

"'Tis an old dream of mine! Can it come true?" he said, eagerly.

"Why not? Make a bonfire of this rubbish and start to-morrow."

This suggestion was not accepted; but with Duval's help the rubbish was speedily stowed away in garrets, or handed over to the auctioneer, and in a week Basil was trudging along a mountain valley, where a noisy brook that had left its romance far behind it, in the

heart of the dim woods, went clattering along, stopping to turn a wheel or two as it went, and presently vanishing between hedges of alder and clematis.

There was a row of diminutive cottages following its sinuous course, each with its bed of bright flowers before it, and each tastefully painted and neatly kept. Along the pretty, winding path that led to the quaint red mill, troupes of chattering, laughing people went up and down at every ringing of the bell. The women had bright faces, and the men had not that overworked look that belongs to our native population; and Basil, attracted by something picturesque and pleasant in their appearance, found himself listening one day to scraps of conversation that floated past him, and was presently surprised by a musical French *patois*.

It came upon him so oddly, as contrasted with the nasal vernacular that had greeted him all over the country, that he stood quite still, till the stragglers were all shut inside the gate. All save one, for, as he roused himself, and started on, a low-toned melodious voice close at his elbow said:

"Monsieur smiles! Monsieur has happy things to think about!"

Basil looked down. A little old-fashioned figure, and a pair of large soft eyes were immediately apparent to his startled senses.

"I am glad to see monsieur smile." And this time Basil noticed a peculiar tenderness in the voice. "I have watched him every day for a week, and he has always seemed grave and absorbed."

Quite unconsciously Basil was walking along by her side, and now said:

"I have reason enough for gravity, God knows; and as for absorption, that is my way," he added, smiling.

The soft, sweet Madonna eyes sought his face.

"Is not this world well worth monsieur's notice? The brook yonder foaming over the dam, the alders, and the white-flowered clematis, and the tall elms above them?"

"It is a pretty place for a home. One might easily enough dream away a summer's day here," said Basil.

"But we do not dream here. We work," said the girl, smiling.

"What do you do?"

"We make ribbons—ribbons as fine as those of Lyons, only your American people will not believe that, and so we have to put pretty French pictures on our goods, and tell a white

lie or two in the way of our business," said the wise little woman.

Basil looked at her curiously.

"And did the master send to France for a colony of operatives? And is it so that I stumble upon the buzzing French bees?"

"Precisely, monsieur!" Then she broke into a merry laugh.

"Does monsieur know that he literally stumbled over me but yesterday?"

"I did not know it, but I ask your pardon."

"O, you need not humiliate yourself before me. I am only Marguerite, the ribbon weaver. If it were Pauline now, she would make a stately courtesy and say that monsieur was forgiven."

"And who is Pauline?" said Basil, amused.

The girl's face assumed a puzzled look.

"That is not easy to say," she replied, in a mysterious, low tone. "I sometimes think she is a princess in disguise, and other times, when I am angry because she scolds me, I say she is only a cross old woman whom some day I shall run away from. And now I must bid monsieur good-day." And she dropped him a graceful courtesy.

"One moment, pray," said Basil, hastily. "You who know the village so well should be able to tell me of some hospitable person who takes lodgers."

"Does monsieur wish to stay? Why, then, Pauline is the very woman who will be pleased to oblige him. Yonder she lives, in the house where the parrot swings in his cage—a little old woman in a white cap who has very sharp eyes and is fond of money—that is Pauline! And we live there by our two selves—Pauline and I—and are very happy except when we quarrel, which is not so often now as it used to be."

"How is that?" Basil asked.

Marguerite shook her head.

"That is a secret that I shall not confide even to you," and now she nodded a gay good-bye and tripped away.

It seemed as if the sunshine had been suddenly withdrawn. Basil gazed after her a moment, looking with a feeling of envy at the tall red mill that had swallowed her up from his sight; and then rousing himself, hastily crossed the street, hurried along under the shade of the elms, and presently stopped against the door where the handsome parrot prinked his gold-green feathers in the sunshine. The upper half of the door was of glass, and through the panes he could see the whole interior. It reminded him of one of

Pousset's exquisite and truthful life pictures. A tidy room, the floor scoured spotlessly white, a tiny fire upon the hearth, where pussy dozed and winked, a vase of flowers on the table, a tall clock in the corner, and in the midst an old woman reeling silk—a woefully wrinkled old woman, but bright and keen as if she were but twenty. Her small, shapely hands went swiftly on with her work, and as she gently swayed to and fro, Basil caught the gleam of a glittering jewel upon her bosom. A moment he watched, and then knocked gently.

"Entrez!" said a voice within.

The old woman turned as he entered, and Basil thought the diamond on her bosom was scarcely brighter than her eyes.

"Monsieur is welcome," she said, blandly. "Would you please to sit down. I knew you were a gentleman. One of the boorish country folk would have made me hobble to the door to admit him. Can I do a service for monsieur?"

"That is what I came to ask," said Basil, and preferred his request. Pauline's face, which was at first so bland and smiling, hardened as he went on. At the close of his little explanatory speech nothing was heard save the whir of the wheels as Pauline rapidly turned them round and round.

"Monsieur will pay, of course," she said, coldly.

"Whatever you please," returned Basil, with his constitutional indifference to his interest.

"And in advance?"

"If you choose," said Basil, a little surprised at the stipulation.

"Monsieur can come. You want quiet? You shall have it. There is no one to disturb except my grandchild Marguerite, a madcap girl whose acquaintance it will be well to discourage if you would be quiet."

Basil bowed, mentally determined to disregard her hint.

"She is away most of the day though, as good luck has ordained it, and Don Carlos is not a conversational bird, and I am not fool enough to talk to myself," said the old woman.

"I have no doubt I shall be quite satisfied!" he replied.

"If you are not, it is open to you to leave," said Pauline, with pride. "But I shall make you comfortable. Go up stairs, monsieur, if you please, and the door to the right will lead you to your bedroom."

Louis Duval occupied a suite of apartments at the Albion. Their appointments were perfect, for that gentleman was a bit of a Sybarite as well as an amateur of the fine arts, and every rich old city on the continent had contributed to the embellishment of these rooms. But he told himself over and over again that no one of his imported treasures had given him the pleasure that this little picture of Basil's had done.

It hung opposite the *Bella Donna* of Titian, and the brown-eyed beggar-girl looked shyly up into the face of the stately, beautiful lady nor lost by the contrast.

As he cut the pages of his magazine, Louis ever and anon looked up to meet those tender eyes. Presently the valet came in.

"Pierre! all those letters for me to read?"

Pierre smilingly set the salver down at his master's elbow and departed.

"Now if there is anything in the world I do hate," soliloquized Louis, "it is to have a letter—for a letter must be answered: You can't turn your back upon it as you can upon a bore who talks without answering you. If I had any friends it would be another matter, but I haven't one except poor Deane—and by the way that's his sign manual. I'll keep that till the last. Ah, here' a missive from Clarendon."

"DEAR DUVAL:—I have been looking after your affairs but don't come to any positive conclusion. Evidence tends to show the existence of the person to whom the codicil to the will refers, but she seems to have disappeared mysteriously, and as yet I have found no clue to her whereabouts. You are so well off now, and so generous, that I suppose you wouldn't break your heart if this new claimant should appear."

"Don't think I should! I'd gladly divide the property with any one who shared my name. And now, Basil Deane, for you!"

"MY DEAR LOUIS:—You never did a kinder thing than when you took my pretty beggar-girl off my hands and sent me into the country. I think I never lived before. If nothing happens I mean to do something else than dream henceforth. The cars left me a hundred miles from any town of magnitude, and when I shouldered my knapsack, I took a direct course still further into the heart of the wide, lonesome country. Avoiding the great, arterial lines of communication, I travelled steadily towards the mountains. I followed deep,

swift rivers along their courses; I rested at noonday in damp hollows where the sun never shines, and the water drips constantly from the massive, mossy rocks; sometimes perpendicular walls shut me in, up which the eye went thousands of feet sheer into the heavens; when night overtook me, far from any dwelling, I lay down my blanket and slept tranquilly under the blue, starry roof; by times the whippoorwill sung me to sleep; often the weird owl hooted through the night-watches; alpenstock in hand I climbed mountains—threading cool, fir forests, scaling cliffs, stopping to snatch harebells, blue as the sky, from the edge of some precipice, and climbing higher, always higher, till I stood on the bald rock where breezy mountain airs caressed and inspirited me. I grew always much happier for this, but one day there came a longing to behold the face of man or woman. And so coming suddenly upon a little village that clung to the banks of a swift stream, I determined to rest here a few days.

"This place has an old-world flavor about it; there is a ribbon factory from which the town draws its sustenance, and the inhabitants are mostly from the humbler class of French artisans. The women wear broad hats, and pretty laced bodices and have plenty of gay ribbons for Sunday.

"I am housed with an old woman and a young girl. I have not quite made out the relation between them yet, but it is apparently one of interest rather than affection. I wish you could see my old woman. Her face is as yellow as the gold that she loves so well, but her eyes are as bright as diamonds. And speaking of diamonds, reminds me of a remarkable ornament that she wears. It is a Greek cross, the arms studded with glittering stones, pure and brilliant as stars. I ventured to make a remark concerning it when I had been there a week.

"Those are very fine diamonds of yours, Mademoiselle Pauline," I said. The old woman started and I fancied grew pale.

"Diamonds! monsieur, you must be joking. How should an old woman like me wear diamonds?" she said, sharply.

"Your brooch is an heir-loom, I suppose?"

"No, monsieur! I have no ancestors, I am only one of the *bourgeoise*." I had always suspected that she had been a servant in her own country. She has the courtier-like—and at the same time—impudent air of a lady's maid. How did she come by the diamonds?

"For all that," I said, positively, "those are fine diamonds."

"Paste, monsieur, paste! They do these things with wonderful art in France!" said the old woman; and then she gave me a valuable account of certain professed gems that proved to be spurious.

"Now I could have sworn to the genuineness of the diamonds, but I let the subject drop. I am, however, quite curious in regard to this old woman. Nobody in the village knows anything of her antecedents, and she is quite an ogre to the children, of whom, indeed, she is not at all fond, reserving all her affection for an ancient parrot who sits in sullen silence all day long.

"My feeling for Marguerite—that is the girl's beautiful name—is not curiosity. I am afraid I fell in love with her before I painted her portrait. That process is, however, begun. It was at first resisted by old Pauline, under the plea that it would keep Marguerite from her work, but when I offered to pay for the sittings she consented. So that now I have the privilege of sitting two hours a day studying the most beautiful face in the world.

"She scarcely glanced at the picture the first two or three days, but one day she peeped over my shoulder. Her surprise was charming.

"Am I like that?" she said, her soft, large eyes full of wondering delight.

"Like it, but more beautiful."

"A delicate pink stained her cheek, her lips melted in a smile.

"Do you not flatter, monsieur?"

"I assured her that my pencil did not do her justice.

"Monsieur is very good," she replied, with downcast eyes. "But the picture is like one that Pauline has locked up in her drawer. I do not know who it is, but sometimes I think it is my mother.

"A touching sadness veiled her face as she said this, and for a minute I did not venture to speak, but presently I said:

"Don't you remember your mother?"

"Ah no! when I look back it is only Pauline, nothing but Pauline."

"Only Pauline! and what is the matter with Pauline, pray?" said a wiry, sinuous voice, and looking, we both saw the wrinkled, yellow visage of the old woman.

"Marguerite grew white and looked frightened.

"See now, monsieur, the ingratitude of girls! What would Marguerite have done

without me? Tell me that, Marguerite!"

"A look of vivid dislike crossed the girl's face, and she hastened away.

"Who is Marguerite?" I said, abruptly.

"The old woman's eyes glittered curiously.

"Do you not guess? What should she be but a poor foundling whom for sweet charity's sake I adopted?"

"Something in the subtle evil look in old Pauline's face as she said this, made me certain that it was a lie. But I said nothing, and the old creature began tiptoeing round my apartment, examining the drawing and other unfamiliar articles with more curiosity than good manners. She had my precious head of Clytie in her hand when Marguerite returned.

"Letters, monsieur!" she said.

"There were a handful of them, and the superscription of yours caught my eye in an instant. In my surprise and pleasure I pronounced your name aloud. There was an instantaneous crash at the other end of the room. I turned astonished and beheld that hideous old Pauline—she looked for the moment like some ancient beldame in poem or story—her face a deathly, yellowish white, and her eyes wide open and glaring fixedly upon me.

"My God!" she said, in a strange, harsh voice.

"What is the matter?" I asked, ruefully eyeing the fragments of my Clytie.

"As she still stood, looking at me with that stony stare, Marguerite ran forward.

"Pauline! Pauline!" she said, in terror.

"Pauline looked around. Slowly the natural color came back to her face.

"Are you ill?" I asked, going up to her. "Let me lead you to a seat."

"Thanks, monsieur! I am not ill. 'Twas an accursed wasp stung me. Mon Dieu! 'twas like a stab," she replied, angrily.

"I looked around for the insect, but failed to discover it, and after Pauline, her hand closely clasped over the wounded finger hobbled away to procure some application for it, I looked still more carefully yet without success.

"When I thought the whole matter over I could not help coming to the conclusion that the sting was a pretence. Could the mention of your name have affected her so powerfully? Am I right in my impression that your family is from southern France? I can't tell you how this little tableau excited me. Pauline was before me as soon as I closed my eyes to sleep. As the only way of laying the spectre I have

made a crayon study of her. Marguerite came and peeped over my shoulder, as I worked at it.

"Ah, it is Pauline!" she said, with a slight shudder. "Is it not ugly?"

"I looked up into her glowing, young face, and seeing that forgo my picture. Her complexion is like a white rose; her eyes large and brown with curling lashes that seem to caress the lovely cheek; her movements are all light and graceful as a fairy's, and there is about her that indescribable aura of youth, and innocence, and sweetness, which is too apt to vanish sadly early from our city maidens, mingled with a frankness, and *naïtete*, and a piquancy peculiar and characteristic. Louis, you must come and see my perfect wild rose."

For answer to this voluminous epistle, Basil received a half sheet from his friend containing this curt announcement.

"I am coming, expect me on Thursday."

Basil came in at dinner time, his eyes shining with pleasure at this prospect of meeting his friend.

"Monsieur has good news," said Pauline, with a scrutinizing look at his face.

Basil glanced at her, suddenly resolved to see what effect the intimation of Louis Duval's visit would have upon her, and so doing, perceived that the glittering brooch which usually fastened the real lace kerchief she wore was missing. But hardly conscious at the time that he did notice its absence, he said, watching her closely:

"You are right, Mademoiselle Pauline. My friend, Louis Duval, is coming to make me a visit."

Either Pauline's nerves were under nicer control, or Basil's suspicions were unfounded, for she answered composedly:

"I congratulate you, monsieur. But dinner is served."

As Basil sat down at the table he asked:

"Would it be convenient for you to accommodate my friend also?"

"Monsieur and his friend are most welcome to the whole house," returned Pauline, in a peculiar tone.

"Thank you!" said Basil, inwardly repenting of his distrust of her, and leaping at once to the conclusion that his imagination had made a fool of him. "You are very kind, mademoiselle, but one additional room will suffice for us."

That morning Marguerite gave him another

sitting, and the portrait was considerably advanced. In the afternoon he went upon a long excursion outside the village, exploring paths that—disappearing in the heart of odorous green woods—tempted him with their mysteries; loitering along the shores of brooks where the water ran musically, and the vivid cardinal flowers flaunted their splendor, finding everywhere charming bits of landscape and enjoying them with all his soul. He could not reproduce them. Nature was wayward toward her lover, and refused to sit to him for her portrait, and his landscape pictures never adequately expressed his appreciation of her. He got his tea at an isolated farmhouse, and came home in the luminous evening.

The house was dark and still as he approached it; the rows of lilacs in the humble garden stood up tall and dark against the white, mellow light; the air was full of cool, sweet scents. The night was too lonely, and Basil's heart was too full for sleep, and he sat leaning from the window, listening to the rush of the river which made a pleasant accompaniment to his dreams.

It seemed to Basil Deane as if his life had but just begun. Hitherto he had failed, and his life had had too many burdens, and too few hopes, for him to think of asking another to share it; but now all was changed; nothing seemed impossible. He loved Marguerite, and that love threw its glow adown the future, and gave it a tender beauty.

While he thought of her, he saw the flutter of her light dress in one of the shaded alleys. Obeying his first impulse he went out to her.

"Marguerite!" he said, coming upon her suddenly.

She started.

"Ah, it is you, monsieur?" and her face was illumined.

"It is I!" taking her hands and holding them, while her eyes fell before the tender passion in his.

"Do you want me?" she said, softly.

"I want you, Marguerite, to have and to keep forever."

Her hands trembled—she faltered out:

"I thought Pauline sent you for me!"

"Nobody sent me. I saw you and came because I love you and wanted to be with you. Will you be my wife, Marguerite?"

"Your wife, monsieur! I am a poor ribbon weaver!" her innocent eyes lifted to his in frank surprise.

"And I am a poor artist. There is no

disparity between us. The only question is of your loving me."

Between the fall of the rushing river, and the drone of the crickets chirping to the July night, came Marguerite's answer.

"There is no question of that, monsieur."

The moon had dropped below the dark belt of forest that shut in the little valley where Basil fell asleep. When he awoke the sun was far up the sky. The remembrance of the past night came to him like a dream of ineffable happiness, and he was thinking it over and over, trying to make it real, when a loud knocking upon the outside door of the house surprised him. No one came to answer, though the knocking was repeated. After wondering and waiting a few minutes, he dressed hastily and ran down.

A man stood at the door; his face was hard and full of business, but just now it wore a singular expression of impatience.

"What the deuce is the matter here?" he said, testily.

"I don't understand you, sir. How should anything be the matter?" said Basil, rather haughtily.

The stranger looked at him contemptuously. He knew him by sight—an artist whose wits were often wool-gathering.

"You don't know me, I see. I am Mr. Sandford, the proprietor of the mill yonder, and I came to see why Marguerite don't come to her work. Here's the loom standing still and it's after nine o'clock."

Basil experienced a sudden shock; he was thrilled with a nameless foreboding. Turning silently away he opened the door of the little kitchen. It was still and empty, no fire on the hearth; no signs of life anywhere. Beckoning the stranger to follow, he crossed the room, and after tapping at the door of the bedroom where Pauline slept, opened it and looked in. The bed had been undisturbed since the day before. Confronting Mr. Sandford with a face white with terror, Basil cried:

"Good Heaven! what could have happened?" but then, without waiting for an answer, ran up stairs. He came down in five minutes. "I have looked all over the house and there is no one to be found!" he said, in a terrified tone.

Mr. Sandford shrugged his shoulders.

"Have they run away, do you think?" he asked.

"Why should they run away?" demanded Basil, impatiently, a hundred possibilities at the same time thronging his mind.

There was a brief silence, and then Mr. Sandford said:

"If they were in debt that might explain it; but Pauline was a shrewd, close-fisted old body, and the balance is likely to be on her side."

Basil stared at him, scarcely comprehending what he said. At Mr. Sandford's suggestion a thorough re-examination of the house was made, which only showed that, while no bulky articles had been taken, nothing of value was left; for the furniture was all of the poorest kind, though Pauline's French taste and neatness had made the interior of the cottage attractive.

"This is a confounded annoyance to me," said Mr. Sandford, in an irritable tone. "See here! That girl's place can't be made good this side of the ocean. What am I to do?"

Basil neither knew nor cared. Ignoring his petty trouble, he asked:

"Where did they come from?"

"How should I know? When help was advertised for they came with the rest," Mr. Sandford returned, curtly, indignant at Basil's want of sympathy. It was lost upon Basil, whose head was full of wild plans for the recovery of Marguerite.

"I will find Marguerite if I have to look the whole world over," he said, in soliloquy, and then with an absent good-morning, he turned his back upon the mill-owner.

"I reckon it won't do me much good if he does find her," said Mr. Sandford, frowning as he went away.

The next day Basil Deane presented himself at the Albion.

"Duval, how are you?"

Louis gazed at him blankly a moment.

"I am very much astonished, thank you. Pierre, I shall not go to Montreal this morning."

"No, there's no use going," said Basil, gloomily, and then told Louis of the mysterious fitting, ending with, "Now what do you think of it?"

Louis's mobile face had grown sober. He half-opened his lips to speak, but the distress in Basil's countenance checked the words. He was thinking.

"The girl is an adventurer, who, finding Deane to be poor, or for some other reason of her own, abandoned her prey at the last moment, and fled with her accomplice." As he was still silent, Basil said, impatiently:

"You do not speak. You think I am deceived?"

"I'm afraid you are," gently.

"Upon my life I am not," said Basil, eagerly. "I am a fool in worldly matters if you say so, but I know a pure, true woman when I see her. And I'll find Marguerite!"

He began his search at once, Louis Duval sometimes aiding him, and oftener, as time went by, and his search was unsuccessful, trying to dissuade him.

It was two years after Marguerite's disappearance, and during that time Basil Deane had become a popular artist. His pictures were no longer hung in obscure corners at the annual exhibitions, but were the centre of admiring crowds. And people wondered to see the same sweet face reproduced in so many different guises. Basil was almost in despair because that sweet face eluded him so persistently.

One evening, while walking with Louis, he stepped into a goldsmith's shop upon some trifling errand. A shabby, foreign-looking man stood by the counter, and the goldsmith was saying, coldly:

"This is not a pawnbroker's shop!"

"But if monsieur would be good enough to look at this," said the man, with a French accent, and directly a lucid point shone out.

Basil's hand tightened over his friend's arm.

"That is the jewel I told you of. I know its setting," he said, in an excited whisper.

"Where did you get this?" demanded the goldsmith, looking at him with suspicion.

"It is a family jewel," returned the man, hurriedly, but as if alarmed he began to put the trinket up. "If monsieur does not want it I will offer it elsewhere," he said, and went out. Our two friends silently followed. They threaded numerous streets, and at last came to a narrow, obscure alley. Before a tall, shabby house the man stopped. A hand was laid upon his shoulder.

"What! monsieur?" turning and startled.

"You are only to explain how that jewel came into your possession," said Basil, with resolution.

"Monsieur! It is a family jewel!" he said, in a frightened voice.

"Ah! I imagine you are a man whose antecedents will hardly bear close examination."

"Monsieur, the brooch is my wife's," said the man, gathering courage.

"Indeed! We will go in then and inquire of her." And Basil put his hand upon the bell-pull.

"For Heaven's sake, gentlemen, don't do

that," said the man, his teeth chattering in his fear, "Pauline will be angry."

Basil's heart leaped. For a moment he was incapable of speech.

"Come, come, my friend," said Louis, good-humoredly, "this wife of yours is rather a troublesome personage I should fancy. Suppose you should give us a little information, and we give you money enough to make you independent of Pauline!"

"Monsieur!"

The man's face showed that Louis's random guess was a true one.

"What is it that you wish to know?" he said, doubtfully. Basil and Louis interchanged a few words, of which one caught the man's ear.

"Marguerite!" he exclaimed. "Ah! you know too much already!"

"More perhaps than you think. But come, let us go elsewhere and talk the whole matter over."

The two strolled off down the street, each partly narrowly watching the other.

An hour afterward they all returned, and this time the shabby man opened the door with a latch-key and preceded the others up a long flight. At its end he threw open a door and entered.

"Antoine Jacques, where have you been so long? Idling at a drinking-shop, and spending my money, I dare say!" cried a sharp, cracked voice.

"Keep still, can't you, Pauline! Here are some gentlemen come to see you."

Basil Deane and Louis Duval came forward where the light of the lamp fell on their faces. A shriek burst from Pauline's lips, and then she sank down in a corner, and cowered there in abject fear. Somebody came forward.

"Monsieur!"

"Marguerite!"

The name was a glad cry, and his arms were open to receive her; but she drew herself up with an air of innocent reserve, and said, gently:

"Why do you come to trouble us, monsieur? We have done you no harm. Pray go away and leave us, Monsieur Duval!" still addressing Basil.

Louis stepped forward.

"My name is Louis Duval. My friend here is Basil Deane. Did you not once know him by this name?"

Marguerite's cheeks flushed. She looked in wonder and distress from one to the other, her color visibly rising under Louis's eager

"And, indeed, he seemed unable to remove his eyes from her.

"For Heaven's sake end this scene, Louis!" said Basil, hastily.

"I will. Madame Antoine Jacques—" said Louis.

"My name is Pauline Bassompierre," interrupted Pauline, who had in some degree recovered her composure.

"It was, madame, but you lost that title long ago in that of Jacques. I am very glad to see you, I assure you, Madame Jacques. Indeed, I have been seeking you for a long time, but except for my fortunate meeting with your husband, this evening, my search might have been still unsuccessful."

"So that beast, Antoine, brought you here!" screamed Pauline, in a fury.

"On the contrary, Madame Jacques, we brought him here. I see he has been prudent enough to take himself away, however."

"Who are you? What do you want?" said Pauline, her eyes gleaming maliciously. "What do you come here for? My house is my own!" she shrieked.

"Gently, madame! you know that but for one or two things you would be in the galleys, at Toulon."

"'Tis a lie! you don't know anything about it!" she cried. And her passionate rage overcame her so, that she dropped upon a chair, and sat there, biting her white, quivering lips, to keep them still, and darting rapid, angry glances from one of the gentlemen to the other.

"I didn't come here to anger you," said Louis, pitying her in spite of her wickedness. "You know what I want."

"You won't get it! Go away!"

"Then I must recall a few passages in your life to your remembrance; and I do it as much for the sake of that girl who stands trembling there, as for yours," said Louis. "You know that when you came to be my mother's *bonne* you had just been detected in a crime, which was only overlooked because you were so young. But in spite of her goodness to you, you grew more wicked as you grew older, and when she died, I think that there was no crime for which you were not ripe. It was in the confusion consequent upon her illness that you stole her diamonds, and had paste substituted for them. It was the brooch which was my father's wedding present to her, and which your vanity induced you to wear, that betrayed you at last."

Pauline dropped her face in her hands, and

something between a groan and an imprecation became audible.

"And then, when my father married again, he retained you in the service of his second wife, because of your supposed kindness to my mother. And when my grandfather, angry at this second match, and despising Marguerite's mother—peasant-born but noble-hearted—let you see his hate, you fanned it with lies, and when at last the poor young creature died in my father's absence, you were ready, for money, to abet his shameful crime—the crime by which he sought to obliterate all traces of the marriage which he so disliked. Well, Pauline, you know all this better than I, as I had it at second-hand, and I'll only ask you if you knew that this wicked grandfather of mine repented of his sin, and eager to make atonement, searched every corner of Europe and half over America for you, but failing, died—punished by not being allowed to see the wrong righted? It was left for me to find my sister through a lover's eagerness to discover the girl whose mind you poisoned against him. I suppose it was your avarice that induced you to keep the girl in poverty, and at hard labor, for even my grandfather had enough human feeling to provide for you both. What have you done with the money?"

Pauline began to moan and wring her hands.

"Don't be hard with me, monsieur. I was tempted. I didn't do it of myself."

"I don't mean to be hard with you. I've decided to divide the money you have hoarded between you and Antoine. Upon it you can live comfortably, and learn to be an honest woman, if you will. Now go and get my diamonds!"

She obeyed humbly, bringing them from a dingy closet, where they lay in a rough box beneath a pile of rubbish.

Louis looked them over.

"Pauline, Pauline, you were surely born for the galleys! Go back and get the necklace!"

She went, mumbling something about his being so hard to an old woman.

Louis took the lucid gems out of their rough casket. Their splendor illumined the room.

"Here, Marguerite, little sister!"

He hung them upon her soft, brown curls, dropped them in shining links around her white throat, and fastened them to the dainty wrists. She stood there between her brother and her lover, adorned like a queen, and happier in her simple womanhood than any queen of them all.